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ABSTRACT

This collection of essays seeks to prepare educational theorists and practitioners to accept diversity as a fundamental element in all educational decision making. The collection defines diversity broadly to include differences along racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, ability, socioeconomic, language, and gender lines. Themes running throughout the collection include the reality of cultural diversity in all segments of American culture and the relationship between theory, research, and practice. Another important theme is the teacher's ability to create an environment in which differences are recognized and accepted, while simultaneously providing students with a common set of norms and values that bind students together. A foreword by Geneva Gay, and a preliminary overview by Gary Kiger and Deborah A. Byrnes provide an introduction to the book and to diversity as an educational issue. The book's seven chapters are: (1) "Addressing Race, Ethnicity, and Culture in the Classroom," by Deborah A. Byrnes; (2) "Living with Our Deepest Differences: Religious Diversity in the Classroom," by Charles H. Haynes; (3) "Ability Differences in the Classroom: Teaching and Learning in Inclusive Classrooms," by Mara Sapon-Shevin; (4) "Class Differences: Economic Inequality in the Classroom," by Ellen Davidson and Nancy Schniedewind; (5) "Language Diversity in the Classroom," by Deborah A. Byrnes and Deana Cortez; (6) "Gender Equity in the Classroom," by Beverly Hardcastle Stanford; and (7) "Diversity in the Classroom: A Checklist" by Karen Matsumoto-Grah. (AC)

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COMMON BONDS

Anti-Bias Teaching in a Diverse Society

**Deborah A. Byrnes and
Gary Kiger, Editors**

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Foreword

Geneva Gay

One of the most prevalent and salient features of humanity in general and American culture in particular is pluralism. It stems from many different sources—ideology, politics, religion, national origins, language, ethnicity, social class, gender, personal experiences and individual abilities. The general trend in the past has been for American institutions to acknowledge and celebrate those select dimensions of diversity in their official policies and actions that served economic and political ends, but aggressively to ignore and deny others. Schools served a major role in this latter function.

For the longest time, education in the United States was thought of as “the great equalizer.” All students were to be treated the same, and thus homogenized into a common culture and class. The problem with this theory was twofold. First, it simply was not true that students from various social, cultural, racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds were treated with the same dignity and respect within the context of the educational process. Second, a single cultural standard of normalcy—that of the dominant group with its Eurocentric orientation—was imposed upon all students as the acceptable way of believing, feeling and behaving. In effect, the schools and other institutions worked in concert to practice cultural hegemony toward many of the diverse groups that make up society.

Despite these concerted efforts to make all individuals within society and schools conform to a middle-class, Anglocentric model, cultural pluralism prevailed. It is now resurfacing with renewed vigor and replenishing vitality. The United States and its schools are becoming even more diversified than they were in the past. Change is due to an increasing self-acceptance among culturally diverse groups, which demands that others respect their right to be different. A new era in immigration is bringing peoples from areas of the world and cultural backgrounds significantly different from previous immigration patterns, with greater growth rates among people of color in the general population and especially among student enrollments in schools. Accompanying these changes in demographics are growing demands that diversity be accepted as a fundamental element in all educational decision-making.

Common Bonds: Anti-Bias Teaching in a Diverse Society is written in this spirit. A persistent theme throughout is the reality of cultural diversity in all segments of American culture. In schools this translates into the need for educational policies, programs and practices to incorporate this reality. This theme is developed further through explanations of the wide range of diversifying factors and forces evident among student populations, including race, ethnicity, gender, physical and intellectual abilities, religion and languages, and how they do and should affect educational opportunities and experiences. That diversity should be an acknowledged, celebrated and determining factor in all instructional decision-making is the resoundingly clear message of all the contributing authors. They make this point vigorously, cogently and convincingly.

Another major issue in most current dialogues about educational effectiveness and pedagogical quality is the relationship between theory and practice. *Common Bonds* deals directly and impressively with this issue. Theory, research and practice are woven together to develop powerful and persuasive explanations of the whats, whys and hows of integrating cultural diversity into classroom teaching. The incorporation of case studies of actual classroom teaching in the narrative text of each chapter is one of the strongest features of this book. Allowing these case examples to tell their own stories in their own voices significantly enriches the rest of the content and brings a level of credibility to the arguments too rarely seen in educational publications. The case studies authenticate the theoretical ideas and general principles proposed by the authors by showing how they are carried out in the instructional behaviors and personal experiences of classroom practitioners.

A commendable feature of this book is its easy readability. The authors and editors write about complex and often controversial issues with clarity, conviction, passion and compassion, yet avoid sermonizing, being ostentatious or intimidating. They inform and teach while simultaneously affirming the creativity and accomplishments of others. They place their arguments, ideas and recommendations in the acceptable conceptual frameworks of cultural diversity, as well as the broader contexts of learning theories, pedagogical principles and new developments in instructional practice. The result is a book that is easy and enjoyable to read, an enriching and useful reference for education theorists and practitioners, and a commendable contribution to the body of scholarly and methodological literature on education for and about cultural diversity.

Contents

3	Foreword <i>Geneva Gay</i>
7	Introduction <i>Gary Kiger and Deborah A. Byrnes</i>
11	Chapter 1 Addressing Race, Ethnicity and Culture in the Classroom <i>Deborah A. Byrnes</i>
23	Chapter 2 Living with Our Deepest Differences: Religious Diversity in the Classroom <i>Charles C. Haynes</i>
39	Chapter 3 Ability Differences in the Classroom: Teaching and Learning in Inclusive Classrooms <i>Mara Sapon-Shevin</i>
53	Chapter 4 Class Differences: Economic Inequality in the Classroom <i>Ellen Davidson and Nancy Schniedewind</i>
71	Chapter 5 Language Diversity in the Classroom <i>Deborah A. Byrnes and Deana Cortez</i>
87	Chapter 6 Gender Equity in the Classroom <i>Beverly Hardcastle Stanford</i>
105	Chapter 7 Diversity in the Classroom: A Checklist <i>Karen Matsumoto-Grah</i>
109	Contributors



Introduction

Gary Kiger and Deborah A. Byrnes

Each year, American schools become more diverse. The varieties of cultural backgrounds, religious affiliations, socioeconomic classes, ability categories and language groups that characterize students in contemporary society pose an unprecedented challenge to teachers. And, because of immigration and high birth rates among lower socioeconomic status and ethnic minority groups, the diversity in schools will only grow in the foreseeable future.

There is a tendency in the popular culture to celebrate diversity. Writers and commentators often admire the rich blend of cultural differences found in society. While these observers have a point, it is equally true that diversity is difficult—especially in schools. How, for example, are teachers to communicate with, much less educate, children who do not speak English? What if a teacher's class includes 20 percent recent-immigrant, Afghanistani-refugee children, 15 percent Hmong children and 25 percent Salvadoran children? How, for example, can a white, middle-class, Catholic teacher be culturally sensitive to lower socioeconomic status, culturally diverse or, say, Islamic children? Gender and ability differences among students add yet another important dimension to diversity in the classroom.

Schools traditionally served as places where minority students—whether they were ethnic, religious, gender or language minority-group members—were assimilated into the American culture, a culture typified as white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant and male. Today, for a variety of reasons, the traditional view of schools as the melting pot for cultural differences among students is being challenged. There are often pitched battles by various ethnic, language and religious groups for control of the curriculum and emphasis of their particular heritage in classrooms. And, in other cases, students with language problems or ability differences may sense that they are academically abandoned. Teachers are often faced with the dilemma of how to respect differences while finding some common basis for children to feel included in the classroom environment. These teachers, not surprisingly, may feel ill-prepared to address the diverse cultural, personal and academic needs of their students.

Purpose and Organization of This Book

The purpose of this book is to examine the growing diversity in schools in a constructive, empowering manner. Contributing authors identify various forms of cultural diversity and suggest ways that teachers can build inclusive classroom environments. Their common theme is that, while diversity poses difficulties, teachers can create an environment in which differences are recognized and accepted while simultaneously providing students with a common set of norms and values that bind students together. In addition, the authors suggest ways for enabling students to discard existing stereotypes and actively question and reject attitudes and actions not congruent with a pluralistic society.

Each of the six topical chapters deals with a different form of diversity in schools: a) racial/ethnic, b) religious, c) ability, d) socioeconomic class, e) linguistic and f) gender diversity among students. Chapter 1 by Deborah A. Byrnes, "Addressing Race, Ethnicity and Culture in the Classroom," examines ways in which teachers can work toward racial and ethnic equity, social justice and democratic goals in their classrooms. She suggests two broad strategies. First, teachers should create "multicultural, anti-bias learning environments" that would include, for example, curricular materials that explore a range of racial and ethnic cultural content. The other approach is to teach schoolchildren to act assertively against prejudice and discrimination. Teachers have an opportunity to be role models by responding to issues of prejudice or discrimination that arise in student interactions, news reports or school materials. Although schools alone cannot eliminate racism in society, teachers can do much, Byrnes argues, to help children understand and accept racial and ethnic differences.

Chapter 2, "Living with Our Deepest Differences: Religious Diversity in the Classroom," by Charles C. Haynes, focuses on the limits and possibilities of dealing with religious issues. Haynes contrasts "teaching religion" with "teaching about religion"; the latter is encouraged, while the former is unconstitutional. Because religious beliefs involve ultimate values not easily compromised, it is not surprising that religious issues have engendered bitter debates about the place of religion in public education. While certain religious interest groups have sought to influence textbook selection and curriculum development in schools, it is equally true, Haynes maintains, that teachers and textbooks have too often neglected religion entirely as a topic of study and discussion. Haynes makes a compelling argument that religious differences can be respected and addressed in the classroom if democratic, constitutional principles guide the approach.

Mara Sapon-Shevin, in "Ability Differences in the Classroom: Teaching and Learning in Inclusive Classrooms" (Chapter 3), explores ability differences. She compares and contrasts the different kinds of abilities that characterize students; physical, perceptual and cognitive abilities are among the various dimensions schools use to differentiate pupils. Sapon-Shevin summarizes the arguments commonly heard for isolating students on the basis of ability: bright children may be "held back" by "slower learners" and special needs children cannot face the challenges of the regular classroom. She then reports the negative effects of separating children based on narrow notions of ability. Sapon-Shevin stresses the need to rethink our operating definitions of "ability" and to appreciate the research findings on the positive effects of current inclusive classroom environments.

In Chapter 4, "Class Differences: Economic Inequality in the Classroom," Ellen Davidson and Nancy Schniedewind focus on the effects of a student's socioeconomic status on his/her experiences at school. A child's class background correlates with his/her parents' attitudes about learning, classroom discipline and academic achievement. Also, a pupil's class background can influence interactions he/she has with peers and teachers (who are, by and large, drawn from the middle class). For example, peers can use class differences to ridicule one another. By not being sensitive to a child's family's lack of economic resources, teachers can unintentionally plan assignments that highlight class differences. Davidson and Schniedewind show how addressing class differences in a constructive fashion involves more than being sensitive to differential wealth among students; it also involves addressing moral judgments

based on class differences, which are made about children and their parents.

Linguistic diversity is the topic of Chapter 5, "Language Diversity in the Classroom." Deborah A. Byrnes and Deana Cortez, exploring the relationship between language and culture, maintain that language differences and language learning cannot be understood without appreciating the culture in which a language is imbedded. They examine ways in which teachers can apply what they know (about language and culture) and enlist the assistance of classmates to teach English in a nonstigmatizing way to a limited-English-proficient student. Byrnes and Cortez also discuss the importance of exploring with pupils attitudes about language and language differences.

In the final topical chapter (6), "Gender Equity in the Classroom," Beverly Hardcastle Stanford examines the effects of sexism on school children. Stanford reviews research on gender differences in teacher-pupil interactions, academic achievement and student aspirations. She then offers suggestions to teachers on how to identify in the classroom patterns of gender inequity, which has a particularly insidious character. Even well-meaning teachers sometimes may find it difficult to recognize when they treat boys and girls differently. The encouraging theme in Stanford's work is the observation that "improved, equitable teaching can be brought about remarkably quickly."

The concluding chapter by Karen Matsumoto-Grah is a checklist for classroom teachers of the important points raised by the authors. This useful device summarizes succinctly issues teachers need to bear in mind as they create inclusive classroom environments where common bonds are discovered and differences respected.



Addressing Race, Ethnicity and Culture in the Classroom

Deborah A. Byrnes

We live in an increasingly ethnically, racially and culturally diverse society. Yet, schools do little in preparing children to live harmoniously and equitably with such diversity. This chapter addresses the need for educators (most specifically classroom teachers) to take strong positions in opposing prejudice and discrimination in schools and society and to actively educate for attitudes compatible with a racially, ethnically and culturally diverse democratic society.

Because teachers often believe children, particularly young ones, are too protected or naive to have developed any understanding of, or judgments about, race and ethnicity, discussions about race and ethnicity are often avoided. Some educators maintain that discussing such topics brings children's attention to differences that would otherwise go unnoticed. They may hope that if nothing is said, children will grow up thinking race and ethnicity make no difference. While these teachers may be well-meaning, their beliefs actually work against children growing up free of racial and ethnic prejudice. Such beliefs ignore the evidence that: a) children start developing attitudes about race and ethnicity at a very young age, as early as 3 or 4 (Katz, 1976); b) skin color is the characteristic that can shape a child's experience more than any other with the possible exception of gender (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987); c) prejudice based on race and ethnicity remains a major social problem (Gibbs, 1990); d) not talking about race and ethnicity makes children easy targets of stereotypes to which they are exposed almost from birth (Pine & Hilliard, 1990); and e) children learning to understand and accept differences among various racial and ethnic groups and to actively fight against instances of racial and ethnic prejudice is essential if we are to create a society where there is equality for all (Lynch, 1987).

There is little doubt that if substantial changes are to be made so that all racial and ethnic groups are treated equitably, every person involved with educating children must take an active role in the process. Although this chapter deals specifically with the role of the classroom teacher, the information contained here is also relevant to all those concerned with creating multicultural, anti-bias learning environments. While changing schools alone will not rid society of prejudice and bigotry, schools can make a valuable contribution to the resolution of this pervasive and difficult social problem.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first contains recommendations for creating multicultural, anti-bias classrooms and schools. The second section is a case study describing how one teacher has incorporated many of these recommenda-

tions. The third section lists resources on multicultural education and anti-bias education that will be of help to the classroom teacher.

CREATING MULTICULTURAL AND ANTI-BIAS CLASSROOMS

In addressing the need to integrate multicultural education into all areas of the school curriculum, it is important that teachers engage in self-reflection, professional development and personal growth. Outlined here are ways teachers can work with children that are effective in reducing racial and ethnic prejudice. Additionally, recommendations are made for ways teachers can work with other adults to facilitate the development of multicultural, anti-bias learning environments.

Education That Is Multicultural and Anti-Bias

All curricula should be anti-bias and multicultural. Unfortunately, multicultural education has too often been interpreted as the addition of teaching units about different cultures taught during special weeks or seasons of the year. Native Americans are studied at Thanksgiving time, African-American culture around the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mexican Americans on the Cinco de Mayo. The rest of the year minority cultures are relatively ignored, reinforcing students' notions that non-European groups are not really an integral part of American society.

When multicultural education is incorporated into a curriculum through the use of separate units, the rest of the curriculum often remains unchanged. All other subjects continue to be presented in the usual way, in a manner that may ignore minority cultures (i.e., subjects such as history, literature, science, art and music are taught only from a Euro-American perspective). The study and appreciation of different racial and ethnic groups must be integrated daily into all areas of the curriculum. Multicultural education must go beyond the presentation of cultural artifacts such as art, food and clothing, or the celebration of special holidays or famous persons. Such approaches are often patronizing and deflect attention from the day-to-day contributions and achievements of all individuals and groups.

Assessing materials. Educators aspiring to integrate multicultural, anti-bias education into the entire school curriculum must carefully evaluate their teaching materials. All too often the resources readily available to teachers (e.g., textbooks, films, resource units) are strongly biased toward the Euro-American perspective. In the process of sharing only the Euro-American perspective, the contributions of people of color are devalued, giving students the message that Euro-Americans are superior. For example, many United States history books begin with the arrival of Europeans and then focus almost exclusively on the contributions of Euro-Americans. Other non-European groups are rarely acknowledged adequately for their contributions in building and enriching the United States.

While some states are beginning to demand dramatic changes in the textbooks they adopt, most teachers are still left to their own devices to present a more multicultural perspective of their nation. Teachers must make a careful assessment of available materials to see whether changes are needed. Visual aids must be examined to see whether they show diversity of racial and ethnic groups and are nonstereotypical. Children's books should be studied to ascertain what percentage are about people of color and textbooks checked for their integration of the perspec-

tives of minority groups into the subject being discussed. For example, is there discussion of the perspectives and contributions of Mexican Americans in the histories of the southwestern states? Recognizing the inherent bias in many materials available is essential if changes are to occur. If more appropriate materials cannot be found, the biased materials should not be used without comment (i.e., they should be used to generate discussions on bias, stereotyping and discrimination).

Teaching about prejudice and discrimination. As part of establishing and integrating multicultural curricula into a school's educational program, the study and discussion of prejudice and discrimination should be included. Students should be encouraged to recognize that there are differences among various cultural, ethnic and racial groups and learn that it is not the differences, *per se*, that create problems in society. Problems are created when one or more groups make serious value judgments about these differences. Multicultural education should not ignore the realities of these judgments. It is only through recognition of such value conflicts that students can realistically hope to create change. Teachers and students alike should not view "color blindness" (i.e., ignoring or not noticing race or ethnicity) as the ideal attitude. Encouraging students to be "color blind" ignores and denies the importance of race and cultural experiences. We should not have to deny color differences to make someone "acceptable." It is not the differences in race or ethnicity that we should ignore, but the stereotypes and harmful prejudgments about such differences that we must teach students to recognize and work against.

It is important that students understand that many people have suffered and continue to suffer as the result of irrational beliefs and actions (prejudice and discrimination). It is not enough that they understand there is injustice in the world; they must also learn that they can make a difference. By being aware of and sensitive to instances of prejudice and discrimination, students can actively work against prejudice and discrimination in themselves as well as in others. Children should be assisted in developing appropriate responses to instances of prejudice and discrimination (Byrnes, 1988). For example, if a student lets a person who tells a bigoted joke know that one is offended, he/she has taken an important action.

It is important when addressing past and present instances of prejudice and discrimination that Euro-American children not be made to feel *personally* responsible for what others have done. If discussions are not handled sensitively, Euro-American children may feel personally blamed for many of the racial injustices discussed and may respond defensively. Euro-Americans should not be stereotyped as being all racists. Throughout history many Euro-Americans have fought against injustice, prejudice and discrimination. Help your Euro-American students identify with such models.

Self-Awareness

To help children develop respect and understanding for racial and ethnic differences and become actively anti-discriminatory, teachers must ask themselves whether they are good models. Educators ought to examine their own knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and expectations. Because classroom teachers may have little training or experience that prepares them, multicultural, anti-bias education is often difficult to implement. For example, teachers may have little knowledge of other cultures, their values, contributions and experiences because these topics have not been part of their own schooling or teacher-preparation programs. Likewise, many may have little un-

derstanding of the relationship between race or ethnicity and power and the injustices that prejudice and discrimination create (Pizzillo, 1983; Robertson, 1987). These educational deficiencies tend to be passed on to students when teachers are unaware of racial and ethnic biases existing in their own educational settings (Lynch, 1987). Only through self-education and self-monitoring can teachers avoid passing on the ethnocentrism pervasive in the society and educational system.

Seek out knowledge. Opportunities to gain insight into other cultures and learn about relationships among race, culture and power should be seized whenever possible. There are many resources—university classes in ethnic or multicultural studies, inservice workshops, lectures, cultural events, books or, most important, direct contact and interaction with people of other cultures. Involvement in groups whose main purpose is to protect the rights of others (e.g., National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, American Civil Liberties Union, Children's Defense Fund, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith) is another way to become more knowledgeable about social-injustice concerns.

Examine one's own cultural values and expectations. Teachers must also examine their own cultural values and expectations. Every teacher (as well as every student) brings his/her own cultural background to the classroom. Since most teachers and teacher educators in the United States are Euro-American, schools tend to benefit Euro-American students whose cultural patterns and styles are consistent with those of the majority of teachers (Anderson, 1988; Pine & Hilliard, 1990).

It is essential to recognize there can be differences in values and behavioral styles between different groups and that these differences may inadvertently influence attitudes and consequently behavior toward certain students. Teachers should examine themselves to see whether they have "ideal-student" images similar to their own style and background. Such images may result in students who are different in learning style, language or behavior being categorized as less able or disadvantaged (Twitchin & Demuth, 1985). Such labels can affect the expectations a teacher has for a student and, consequently, may have serious ramifications for student achievement (Hilliard, 1989). Demanding less in terms of scholarship, waiting impatiently for responses, criticizing students more, praising less, calling on students infrequently and being less willing to give students the benefit of the doubt are some of the ways educators respond to students who they believe are low in academic ability (Hilliard, 1989; Sadker & Sadker, 1986). Furthermore, when children pick up on a teacher's differing expectations for them or their classmates, the effects may be incorporated into the attitudes the students hold for themselves and others (Twitching & Demuth, 1985).

It is important to understand that most teachers are unaware of the degree to which they are treating certain groups of students differently from others (Sadker & Sadker, 1986). Thus, it is essential that teachers not assume their classrooms are free of bias simply because they personally abhor discrimination. All educators need to examine their classrooms closely for subtle behaviors that may be based on culturally biased images and expectations.

Be actively anti-prejudice and anti-discriminatory. Educators have a responsibility to be models for their students. If they expect students to have tolerance for differences and be actively against bigotry, they must examine themselves for these same qualities. In their teaching and personal actions, educators must demonstrate sensitivity to and respect for cultural differences and a commitment toward creating a plu-

realistic democracy that fights prejudice and discrimination. Are we, as educators, willing to confront racist or ethnic discrimination when it occurs? Do we let others know that we find ethnocentric comments and actions unacceptable? Do our students see us as actively addressing instances of stereotyping and bias? Do students perceive us as being sincerely interested in and respectful of contributions made by the many ethnic and racial groups represented in the country?

Creating Environments That Reduce Prejudice

In addition to integrating a multicultural perspective across the curriculum and being a positive model for students, a teacher can do much to create environments in which respect and understanding for differences are fostered and prejudice and discrimination discouraged. The following strategies have been shown to be helpful in creating more positive attitudes toward persons of other racial or ethnic groups.

Cooperative interactions. One of the most effective means by which students become more accepting of others is in the use of cooperative-learning groups (Lynch, 1987; Pate, 1988). Research on cooperative grouping shows increased academic achievement and improved interracial relations (Pine & Hilliard, 1990). Cooperative learning involves the heterogeneous grouping (by ability as well as by culture and gender) of students who then work together to meet a group goal. There are several ways to structure such learning groups (see, for example, Johnson, Johnson, Holubec & Roy, 1984; Slavin, 1983). Without regard for the particular structure chosen (e.g., Student Teams-Achievement Divisions [STAD], Teams-Games-Tournaments [TGT], Team Assisted Individualization [TAI], Jigsaw), cooperative-learning groups should always take place in ongoing, supportive environments where all participants have equal status.

In schools where the population is homogeneous, such grouping for cross-racial and cross-ethnic interactions is difficult, if not impossible. Any opportunity should be seized, however, to have students engage in cooperative work or play with members of other groups. Such encounters should incorporate the basic components of cooperative education. Members in groups should have equal status, and the work or play should take place in an ongoing, supportive, caring environment and be oriented toward a group goal. Creating sport teams and play groups that combine students from different communities and schools is one suggestion. Care should be taken that inviting members from other racial and ethnic groups to talk about their cultures does not take the place of the above suggested interactions. Exposure only to knowledge about another culture and impersonal, noncooperative interactions do little, if anything, to break down prejudice (Lynch, 1987).

Enhancing self-esteem. Creating classroom environments that promote development of positive self-esteem is another way educators can work against the formation of prejudices (Byrnes, 1988). There is a clear relationship between an individual's self-esteem and degree of prejudice (Pettigrew, 1981). Children who have high self-esteem are less likely to hold prejudices than children with low self-esteem. (This is not to say that the relationship is necessarily causal.) Studies suggest that programs and activities designed to increase self-esteem (a difficult task in itself) also may reduce levels of prejudice (Cook, 1972; Rubin, 1967).

Research tells us that, in general, children have higher self-esteem in school environments that foster security, acceptance, independence and responsibility and where warmth, praise and appropriate limits are consistently present (Samuels, 1977). Cre-

ating such environments should certainly be a priority for educators interested in reducing racial and ethnic bias among their students.

Developing cognitive sophistication. Research evidence suggests that when children develop higher levels of cognitive sophistication they may also become less prejudiced. Dogmatic individuals who think in sharp, dichotomous terms are more likely to be prejudiced and act in discriminatory ways (see review in Pettigrew, 1981). If children learn to identify overgeneralizations and stereotypes and attend to meaningful social behaviors rather than biases, they may become less prejudiced (Pate, 1988). Thus, teachers should provide many opportunities for children to learn about prejudice and discrimination and to identify faulty thought processes that underlie and perpetuate them. Students need to learn to be on guard for stereotypes and inappropriate uses of generalizations and categorical thinking in their own and in others' thinking. (See the prejudice reduction activity books listed at the end of this chapter for numerous activities on this topic.)

Increasing empathy for others. Increasing students' understanding of, and respect for, the feelings of others who are racially or ethnically different has also been shown to be helpful in reducing prejudice (Pate, 1988). Activities with a strong affective component, which elicits empathy, can help students see the world from the point of view of those from other cultural groups. Books, plays, short stories and simulations are particularly effective in helping students understand and empathize with the plight and fight of individuals confronted with discrimination and prejudice (Byrnes, 1988). At the same time, care should be taken that any resources used do not unwittingly perpetuate stereotypes. The Council on Interracial Books for Children (see resource list in this chapter) disseminates a bulletin and several checklists, handbooks and filmstrips to help in selecting appropriate materials.

Working with Others for Change

Teachers committed to multicultural, anti-bias education also work for change beyond their own classrooms, which can be accomplished in many ways. Encouraging your entire school to develop a strong multicultural, anti-bias policy is an important step. Teachers are most effective in combatting prejudice and discrimination when such efforts are long-term and are supported by schoolwide policies and practices (Lynch, 1987). They can talk with other teachers and administrators about what the school as a whole can do to create a learning environment that recognizes and supports the multicultural society. Part of this effort should be toward developing a school anti-racism policy which states explicitly that racial stereotyping, harassment and abuse will not be tolerated (Pine & Hilliard, 1990).

Involve parents. It is also important to involve parents and other community members in efforts to help children develop greater understanding of both benefits and challenges of living in a culturally diverse society (Derman-Sparks, 1989). Parents should certainly be involved in the development of any schoolwide policy. At the classroom level, parents can be informed of the multicultural, anti-bias curriculum emphasis during parent/teacher meetings and in newsletters. It is important to help parents understand that helping children develop healthy attitudes toward others who are different from themselves is essential for children who will be living and working in an increasingly pluralistic, democratic society.

Diversifying the faculty. Any effort to emphasize multiculturalism in one's school should also include a close look at the make-up of the faculty (Sleeter, 1990). Mes-

sages about the worth of all individuals, regardless of race or ethnicity, are hollow if students see only Euro-American teachers and administrators in their schools. Diversity among the staff is essential. The existence of differences among teachers provides students an important lesson in equity, helps them develop respect and understanding of people from racial and ethnic groups other than their own, and provides access to role models for students of color (Pine & Hilliard, 1990, p. 597). While many teachers have limited input into faculty hiring decisions, teachers should use what influence they have to assure the consideration and hiring of teachers who are members of minority groups.

Theory into Practice

So far we have discussed the importance of education that is multicultural and strongly anti-bias. The following case study demonstrates how one teacher has used many of the teaching strategies and processes discussed in this chapter. The case study illustrates how respect for racial/ethnic differences and a deep concern for fairness and social equality can be developed in incidental moments of teaching as well as in more formal curriculum approaches and strategies. Amy Hafter, the teacher in the case study, does not shy away from addressing difficult topics with her students. She recognizes that her students are not "color blind" and that they pick up messages about race and ethnicity in their daily lives. In her democratically oriented classroom, she uses such strategies as cooperative, interracial/interethnic group experiences, activities and questions that promote self-esteem, empathy and higher-level thinking skills, and literature that encourages students to understand and respect other cultures. In serving as a model to her students, she is actively fighting discrimination and is strongly committed to equity and social justice. She wants to instill in her students the importance of working toward a society where all people are respected and treated fairly without regard to their race or ethnicity.

CASE STUDY

This year, when Amy Hafter began a new appointment as a 4th-grade teacher, she became aware of just how much she needed to address issues of prejudice and discrimination with her students. On the second day of school, one of her students called another a "nigger." Amy was dismayed and anguished over this racial slur being used so easily by a 9-year-old. Consequently, she made "respecting differences" her classroom goal this year. According to Amy, "The more I thought about it, the more I realized that prejudice and discrimination start when children are young. We have to address it then."

Amy teaches 4th-graders in a low-income community in Hayward, California. This is her fourth year of teaching, her third at this particular school. She has 29 students, 20 of whom are male. Students are from many ethnic/racial groups. In order of numbers, from most to least, there are Euro-Americans, African Americans, Chicano/Latino Americans, Afghanistani-Americans and Native Americans. No single group represents a majority. Only a few are first-generation immigrants. All have good facility with English.

On my numerous visits to Amy's classroom, I was impressed by what I saw. Her students demonstrated respect for one another, concern for the way individuals were

treated and interest in cultures other than their own; they worked cooperatively. Observing Amy's classroom, I saw principles of multicultural and anti-bias education being integrated creatively and successfully. This is how one teacher is helping to prepare children to live peacefully and thoughtfully in a pluralistic society.

There are 110 desks in Amy's classroom. She chose instead to use large tables that fit into her cooperative-learning philosophy. Students keep their materials in tote trays under the table. Every week or two when groups are changed (always by random assignment), students take their trays with them to their new tables. Amy feels strongly that the students gain academically, socially and emotionally from working in cooperative groups. She also believes that such groups are essential for any program designed to help children accept and respect differences. Observing the groups, I was pleased to note that a new student, purportedly the child of Gypsies, was treated respectfully within her group even after giving a totally illogical response to a group math activity. The children in her group, although some were obviously a bit surprised, accepted her response without teasing or derogatory comment, a good example of one of the basic premises of cooperative groups that Amy teaches her students. You cannot make a person feel uncomfortable about working in the group with you. If you do, you lose the right to work in the group.

Amy enhances her students' self-esteem, another important component of any prejudice-reducing program, by helping them learn that their ideas are valuable and should be heard. She wants them to expect her respect and that of their classmates. Because Amy is careful not to "shoot down" an opinion, she is modeling respect for other points of view and encouraging students to think about issues and to take risks. If a student shows disrespect for someone else's ideas, he/she is usually sent out of the classroom. This rarely happens, except among new students. As soon as she can slip away, Amy asks the student to reflect on why his/her behavior was hurtful and inappropriate and what behavior would be more appropriate. It doesn't take long for them to realize that respecting each other's viewpoints is taken seriously in this classroom. They also learn that their own points of view, in turn, will be respected. As Amy noted, "The students who have been with me all year [about two-thirds of the class] also help a lot in socializing the new ones."

Amy frequently spends time processing group interactions with her students. After a group cooperative project has been completed, they are often asked to talk about how well their group worked together. Did they respect each other's ideas? Was everyone given a chance to contribute? How were disagreements resolved? They are discouraged from using individuals' names in their comments. For example, the comment, "Two members kept making jokes so it was hard to get everyone's ideas written down," is acceptable; "John and Sue kept us from getting done," is not. The students learn not to label their classmates; they learn to define situations in ways that help them resolve conflicts. Students discuss how it feels when others don't cooperate, and they are encouraged to address such situations in their groups.

Any situation involving an individual or group being discriminated against is discussed at length with the whole class. For example, a student recited to some classmates a rhyme that included racist language. Amy talked with the student alone and a time was set aside for the whole class to discuss why rhymes such as these are hurtful. Amy tries to get students to discuss the issue as a group and adds her own views or clarifying points after they have listened to one another. In the above case she asked

her students, "How did you feel when you heard it?" One student answered, "Mad! Because to call someone a 'nigger' means you think they're inferior and dumb."

The students do an admirable job of educating one another. Amy reinforces their reasoning ability by praising their group-discussion skills and their sensitivity to one another's feelings. These students' growing understanding of the nature of prejudice and discrimination is evident in such responses as: "When T called me a 'nigger' it really made me mad. It didn't use to make me as mad when I heard that word. But now I know how my African ancestors were made slaves and it's different. I know what it means."

Amy rarely passes up an informal opportunity to address the importance of respecting cultural differences or to identify instances of prejudice and discrimination toward any group. In mathematics, for example, students practiced their graphing skills using M & Ms. In discussing their work, Amy talked about how M & Ms were a good example of what they had studied about people. We come in a lot of different colors on the outside but we're all the same inside. In a discussion of the popular children's film *Land Before Time*, Amy drew parallels between the prejudice and discrimination some of the dinosaurs experienced with instances of racial and ethnic prejudice that happen in the students' worlds. At the individual level, when a student who was helping Amy after class commented that a woman with an earring in her nose looked weird, Amy used the opportunity to comment briefly on the cultural relativity of beauty.

Discussions on respecting one another, accepting and enjoying differences, and being actively against prejudice and discrimination are purposefully integrated into many curriculum areas. In reading, Amy uses a literature-based reading program. The books she selected for her program this year reflect her purpose of helping students develop empathy and understanding for others without regard to the color of their skin or their cultural background. Some books used were: *Freedom Train*, *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*, *Sing Down the Moon*, *Sign of the Beaver* and *Gold Cadillac*. All these books have racial/ethnic minorities as the main characters, and the plots involve important lessons regarding equality and respect for, and understanding of, cultural differences. Amy asks difficult questions of her students as they read these books. For example, when they studied the book *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*, the class discussed what an "Uncle Tom" was and what it means in their own lives to "kiss up to someone" who is in power.

In the area of social studies, Amy avoids using the textbook whenever she can and instead uses materials more multicultural and less biased toward Euro-American perspectives. She admits this involves more work on her part, but it is the only way she can provide meaningful learning experiences that reflect the cultural composition of her students and their community. Fortunately, Amy's principal is supportive. Recently Amy taught a unit on the history of California that included a strong emphasis on the perspective of minority groups in the state. She is currently in the process of developing additional social-studies lessons that address the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

After her students attended an excellent African-American music history concert and lecture, the class integrated the new information into other topics they had been discussing. They talked about Martin Luther King, Jr., Harriet Tubman and others whose efforts made it possible for the students to have schools like their own, where

all kinds of people could work and play together. Amy talked to her class about how strange it is when she visits her relatives in a community where everyone looks and acts the same. She says it is much more interesting to be where there are lots of different types of people to get to know. Amy leaves no doubt in her students' minds as to where she stands with respect to enjoying diversity and fighting bigotry and prejudice.

When her students, over several weeks, viewed the 12-part PBS video *Voyage of the Mimi - Part II*, Amy frequently stopped the video to discuss topics related to individual and cultural differences. For example, in one episode a character refers to the Mayans as "savages," not knowing that one of the people to whom he was talking was a descendent of the Mayans. In the film, the person is deeply offended and the other character apologizes, stating he didn't know the man was part Mayan. Amy used this event as an opportunity to ask her students why people feel hurt when their culture is criticized. She asked if the comment would have been any more appropriate if no one who was part Mayan heard it. Such discussions encourage students to think critically about prejudice and discrimination, to develop empathy for others and to engage in nonprejudicial verbal and nonverbal behavior.

Students regularly bring in current-events articles to share with the class. They are encouraged to bring in articles that confront important social issues. Consequently, they have frequent discussions on issues such as homelessness, capital punishment and discrimination. One day a student brought in an article about the firing of a Black school superintendent in Selma, Alabama. Amy asked her students what they thought was happening in Selma. A discussion on racism ensued. Many students felt strongly that the superintendent probably was fired because he was Black. They related the situation to other events of which their parents had spoken or to incidents of racial prejudice they themselves had observed or experienced. Amy was noncommittal with respect to her own opinion, but encouraged the students to express and support their own views. At the end of the discussion, one student summarized a solution, "I think the White and the Black people should just be friends and they shouldn't be mean to each other. Even though we're different colors it doesn't mean we can't be friends."

In this case study, I have presented what one elementary school teacher has done in her classroom to develop in her students a respect for diversity and a growing understanding of their responsibility to act in ways that are nonprejudicial and antidiscriminatory. Amy Hafter is an excellent example of what many teachers are doing—working hard to create learning environments that prepare children to live thoughtfully and responsibly in a culturally pluralistic democracy.

There is no such thing as a *neutral* educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom," the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (Shaull, 1970, p. 15)

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

Prejudice-Reduction Activity Books

- Byrnes, D. (1987). *"Teacher they called me a _____!" Prejudice and discrimination in the classroom.* New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.
- Derman-Sparks, L., & the ABC Task Force. (1989). *Anti-bias curriculum: Tools for empowering young children.* Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Gabelko, N. H., & Michaelis, J. U. (1981). *Reducing adolescent prejudice: A handbook.* New York: Teachers College.
- Schniedewind, N., & Davidson, E. (1983). *Open minds to equality: A sourcebook of learning activities to promote race, sex, class and age equity.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Shiman, D. A. (1979). *The prejudice book: Activities for the classroom.* New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Sources for Other Helpful Materials

- Afro-Am Education Materials, 819 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60605
- Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 100017
- Center for Teaching International Relations, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208
- Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc., 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023
- Institute for Peace and Justice, 4144 Lindell, Room 122, St. Louis, MO 63108
- Japanese American Curriculum Project, 414 Third St., San Mateo, CA 94401
- Racism and Sexism Resource Center, 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023

Pamphlets Designed for Parent Education

- Derman-Sparks, L., Gutierrez, M., & Phillips, C. B. (n.d.). *Teaching young children to resist bias.* National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009.
- National PTA & Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. (n.d.). *What to tell your child about prejudice and discrimination.* National Parent Teacher Association, 700 N. Rush St., Chicago, IL 60611-2571.

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- Lynch, J. (1987). *Prejudice reduction and the schools.* New York: Nichols.

- Pate, G. S. (1988). Research on reducing prejudice. *Social Education*, 52, 287-289.
- Pettigrew, T. (1981). The mental health impact. In B. P. Bowser & R. G. Hunt (Eds), *Impacts of racism on white Americans* (pp. 97-118). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Phinney, J.S., & Rotheram, M. J. (Eds.). (1987). *Children's ethnic socialization: Pluralism and development*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
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- Robertson, W. (1987). In-service strategies for teacher education. In T. S. Chivers (Ed.), *Race and culture in education* (pp.96-105). Windsor, Berkshire, England: NFER-Nelson.
- Rubin, I. M. (1967). Increased self-acceptance: A means of reducing prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 5, 233-238.
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- Samuels, S. C. (1977). *Enhancing self-concept in early childhood*. New York: Human Sciences Press.
- Shaul, R. (1970). Foreword. In P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (pp. 9-15). New York: Herder & Herder.
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Living with Our Deepest Differences: Religious Diversity in the Classroom

Charles C. Haynes

Bitter conflicts over the role of religion in the classroom deeply divide the nation and pose a significant threat to the future of public education. The highly charged public battles, notably the "textbook trials" of the mid-1980s in Tennessee and Alabama and the current disputes over textbooks and multicultural education in California and New York, are only the most visible signs of a pervasive alienation from public education felt in many religious and ethnic communities throughout the United States. Not since the 19th century "Bible wars" have so many citizens been so strongly convinced that public schools contradict their values, ignore their traditions and exclude their voices (Flowers, 1988; Glenn, 1988).

Tragically, in communities throughout the nation Americans ignore this threat and continue to shout past one another about "school prayer," "secular humanism," "cultural bias," "religious holidays," "values education" and the many other controversies that have made the public school classroom a battleground for conflicting religious values and world views. Caught in the crossfire are classroom teachers who are told to "educate for citizenship" and "teach appreciation for diversity" in a country where growing "tribalization" pits one group against another in the public square.

The religious differences so prevalent in the battle over public schools are now exacerbated by exploding pluralism in the United States. California alone receives nearly one-third of the world's immigration; minority-group members constitute a majority in public school enrollment (Hodgkinson, 1985). Sixty-seven nationalities are represented in the student body of a single high school in Miami Beach (McCormick, 1990). A teacher in northern Virginia reports that 15 languages are spoken in her class, and often her students must serve as translators at parent-teacher conferences.¹

In school districts across the country, teachers confront daily what other citizens choose to ignore: religious diversity in the United States presents the nation and the schools with unprecedented challenges. The language of pluralism may no longer be confined to the "Protestant, Catholic, Jewish" discussion prevalent in the 1950s. Religious pluralism today includes believers from all the world's faiths and increasing numbers of people who indicate no religious preference at all (up from 2 percent of the

¹The Virginia classroom is one of many similar examples of the challenges of pluralism given by teachers in The Religious Freedom Institute, a summer program for teachers sponsored by the Americans United Research Foundation.

population in the 1960s to nearly 12 percent in the 1990s) [The Williamsburg Charter Foundation, 1988]. Islam, to mention just one highly significant example, will soon be, if it is not already, the second largest faith in the United States after Christianity generally. New populations of Muslims, as well as Buddhists and many other religious and ethnic groups, are entering schools in significant numbers in all areas of the nation (Haynes, 1990, pp. 149-159).

All these developments—religious and ethnic divisions, loss of faith in public education and exploding pluralism—summon us to rethink the role of religion in the classroom. At issue is a simple, but profoundly important question: how will we live with our deepest differences? Our answer to that question may well determine the future of public education and the health of the body politic in the third century of our experiment in constitutional freedom.

ENDING THE SILENCE ABOUT RELIGION

If we are to live with our differences in public education and society, we must acknowledge the importance of religious diversity even as we seek common ground. Efforts by school officials to ignore differences by excluding religion from the curriculum or by acting as though religious divisions do not exist (or do not matter) succeed only in producing false unity and false toleration. Elizabeth Kristol (1989, p. A19) argues:

A healthy pluralism may in fact be characterized by the mutual respect that arises from a simmering of conflicting viewpoints and diverse senses of identity. . . . True tolerance means looking differences squarely in the eye and admitting the appalling fact that when other people seem to differ from us, this is because they actually believe their view of the world to be true.

Respect for differences and authentic toleration will be possible only when schools end what has been a virtual silence about religion. There is much irony in the fact that the public school, the very locus of the "culture wars," is the least likely place to find a discussion of the role of religion in history and society (Davis et al., 1986; Haynes, 1985; Vitz, 1986). Ignoring religion and religious diversity has neither avoided controversy nor encouraged toleration—witness the ongoing court battles and endless fights over textbooks.

Silence about religion has only served to impoverish our curriculum and deny our students a full education. More serious still, we have given students the dangerously false message that religions operate only on the margins of human life and are largely irrelevant to human history and culture. Such misapprehension about religion promotes misunderstanding and intolerance, leaving students prey to distorted notions of how human beings have struggled with questions of meaning and value through the centuries.

The neglect of religion in the curriculum may be traced, in part at least, to the fear of controversy and widespread misunderstanding surrounding the Supreme Court rulings of the early 1960s in declaring state-sponsored religious practices in the public schools to be unconstitutional. What most educators do not understand (or choose to ignore) is that in those same rulings, the Court clearly indicated that teaching *about* religion is not only constitutional, but necessary for a good education.



Fortunately, events in the last five years have brought about a dramatic change in attitudes about the place of religion in the classroom. States and local school districts from California to North Carolina are mandating more discussion of religion in the public schools.² Teaching *about* religion across the curriculum is finally being taken seriously: textbooks are changing, new supplementary materials are available and more opportunities for teacher education are being offered each year.

A CIVIC FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

The growing consensus that study about religion is a proper role for religion in public education offers teachers an unprecedented opportunity for promoting understanding and respect among people of all faiths or none. While this is easy to say (and for states to mandate), it is much more difficult to carry out in the classroom, especially in divided communities where some citizens are suspicious of any initiative public schools may take in study about religion. The risk of not learning about one another in an age of increasing pluralism, however, is much greater than the risk of including religion in the curriculum.

The first requirement for any teacher wishing to deal honestly and openly with religious issues in the curriculum and classroom is to give careful attention to the Religious Liberty clauses of the First Amendment to the Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . ." These 16 words provide the civic framework for teaching about religion and for handling religious differences in the public school classroom.

The United States Supreme Court has interpreted the First Amendment to mean that public schools may neither promote nor inhibit religious belief or non-belief. The public school curriculum may not, therefore, include religious indoctrination in any form (including hostility to religion). Such teaching would constitute state sponsorship of religion and would violate the freedom of conscience protected by the First Amendment.

Religious indoctrination, however, is not the same as teaching *about* religion or giving a fair hearing to religious perspectives. In the 1960s school-prayer cases, which ruled against state-sponsored school prayer and Bible reading, the Court indicated that public school education may include teaching about religion. Writing for the Court in *Abington v. Schempp* (1963, p. 203), Associate Justice Tom Clark stated:

[It] might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment.

² The *History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*, adopted in July, 1987, and statements by the State Boards of Education in North Carolina (1989) and Utah (1990) are three important examples of the new interest in teaching about religion in public schools. Many school districts throughout the nation are currently writing new policies and guidelines for teaching about religion.

Beyond this baseline distinction between indoctrination and study about religion, there are key civic values and responsibilities that flow from the First Amendment's Religious Liberty clauses. These values are so fundamental and enduring (and so vital to the classroom) that a new curriculum, *Living with Our Deepest Differences: Religious Liberty in a Pluralistic Society*, identifies them as the three Rs of religious liberty: rights, responsibilities and respect.³

Rights

Religious liberty, or freedom of conscience, is a fundamental and inalienable right founded on the inviolable dignity of the person. In our religiously diverse classrooms, it is essential that we emphasize this basic right as a cornerstone of American citizenship. Students must have a clear understanding that the rights guaranteed by the Constitution are for citizens of all faiths or those professing none.

Responsibilities

Religious liberty is not only a universal right but it depends upon a universal responsibility to respect that right for others. Teachers must help students of all cultures and faiths to recognize the inseparable link between the preservation of their own constitutional rights and their responsibility as citizens to defend those rights for all others. In the language of the Williamsburg Charter curriculum, this is "the golden rule for civic life."

Respect

Debate and disagreement among people of different faiths and world views are vital to classroom discussion and a key element of preparation for citizenship in a democracy. Yet, if we are to live with our differences, particularly our religious differences, *how* we debate, and not only *what* we debate, is critical. As teachers deal with religious diversity in the classroom, it is vital that they teach a strong commitment to the civic values that enable people with differing religious and philosophical perspectives to treat one another with respect and civility.

Rights, responsibilities and respect, then, are the democratic first principles that give teachers civic ground rules for teaching in a pluralistic society. Every student, of any religion or of no religion, must be given an opportunity to learn about and to affirm the core values that are at the heart of American citizenship. When teaching about the many cultures and faiths of the nation and the world, teachers need simultaneously to teach the common ground—the values and responsibilities that Americans share. Done in this way, teaching about religion and recognizing religious diversity in the classroom become excellent opportunities for teaching respect for the universal rights and mutual responsibilities within which the deep differences of belief can be negotiated.

³The authors of *Living with Our Deepest Differences* are Michael Cassity, teacher and recipient of a 1989 California Educator of the Year Award; Os Guinness, former Executive Director of the Williamsburg Charter Foundation; Charles C. Haynes, Executive Director of the First Liberty Institute; John Steel, Curriculum Project Director and Associate Director of the First Liberty Institute; Timothy L. Smith, Professor of History and Education Emeritus, The Johns Hopkins University; and Oliver S. Thomas, Jr., General Counsel, The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION

The principles of religious liberty remind us that, while no religious consensus is possible in the United States, it does remain possible to develop out of differences a shared understanding of the role of religion in public schools and public life. In 1987, concerned about the recurring conflicts over religion in the schools, a group of educational and religious leaders met in an effort to find common ground based on the civic values of rights, responsibilities and respect.

All of the groups represented, from the National Education Association to the National Association of Evangelicals, expressed great dismay over the divisive battles in the schools and in the courts that have had a devastating impact on public education. All agreed that the confusion about the role of religion in the schools has left school boards, administrators and teachers unprepared to handle religious differences and controversies.

Far too often, schools are asked to deal with societal problems without sufficient support and cooperation from the larger community. The time had come, the group decided, to assist local schools by reaching broad consensus on the national level about the constitutionally permissible and educationally sound role of religion in public education. Such an agreement would help to ensure that religious diversity be respected in the schools and that religious perspectives and values be fairly represented in the curriculum.

After a year and a half of discussion and negotiation, participants found that the principles of religious liberty can provide a common vision for the common good. For the first time, 17 groups from across the religious and political spectrum reached agreement about the proper role of religion in the public school curriculum. The Christian Legal Society joined with the American Jewish Congress. The Islamic Society of North America and the National Council of Churches agreed with the National School Boards Association and the American Association of School Administrators.

The group's guidelines, "Religion in the Public School Curriculum: Questions and Answers,"⁴ stress the important distinction between teaching about religion, which is permissible, and religious indoctrination, which is prohibited by the First Amendment. A strong case was made for the natural inclusion of teaching about religion. In answer to the question concerning where study about religion belongs in the curriculum, the guidelines read:

Wherever it naturally arises. On the secondary level, the social studies, literature, and the arts offer many opportunities for the inclusion of information about religions—their ideas and themes. On the elementary level, natural opportunities arise in discussions of the family and community life and in instruction about festivals and different cultures. Many educators be-

⁴Free copies of "Religion in the Public School Curriculum: Questions and Answers" may be obtained by writing to: The Americans United Research Foundation, 900 Silver Spring Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The sponsors are: American Academy of Religion; American Federation of Teachers; Americans United Research Foundation; Baptist Joint Committee; American Association of School Administrators; American Jewish Congress; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; Christian Legal Society; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; National Association of Evangelicals; National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA; National Council for the Social Studies; National School Boards Association; The Islamic Society of North America; National Conference of Christians and Jews; National Council on Religion and Public Education; and the National Education Association.

lieve that integrating study about religion into existing courses is an educationally sound way to acquaint students with the role of religion in history and society.

Religion also may be taught about in special courses or units. Some secondary schools, for example, offer such courses as world religions, the Bible as literature, and the religious literature of the West and of the East.

A year after the group issued these first guidelines in 1988, members reconvened to tackle the perennial problem of religious holidays in public schools. Despite common admonitions that it was fruitless even to *try* to reach consensus concerning the infamous "December dilemma," the group produced "Religious Holidays in the Public Schools: Questions and Answers."⁵ The publication emphasized that the approach of public schools is academic, not devotional. Consequently,

Teachers must be alert to the distinction between teaching *about* religious holidays, which is permissible, and *celebrating* religious holidays, which is not. Recognition of and information about holidays may focus on how and when they are celebrated, their origins, histories and generally agreed-upon meanings. If the approach is objective and sensitive, neither promoting nor inhibiting religion, this study can foster understanding and mutual respect for differences in belief.

What about the use of religious music, art, drama or literature in public schools? Teaching about religion and religious holidays may include use of art, drama, music or literature with religious themes if it serves a sound educational goal in the curriculum. Use of religious symbols as examples of cultural and religious heritage is also permissible as a teaching aid or resource; however, "religious symbols may be displayed only on a temporary basis as part of the academic program."

The most sensitive and controversial question concerning religious holidays in the schools is, of course, "What about Christmas?" The publication states:

Decisions about what to do in December should begin with the understanding that public schools may not sponsor religious devotions or celebrations; study *about* religious holidays does not extend to religious worship or practice.

Does this mean that all seasonal activities must be banned from the schools? Probably not, and in any event such an effort would be unrealistic. The resolution would seem to lie in devising holiday programs that serve an educational purpose for all students—programs that make no students feel excluded or identified with a religion not their own.

Holiday concerts in December may appropriately include music related to Christmas and Hanukkah, but religious music should not dominate. Any dramatic productions should emphasize the cultural aspects of the holidays. Nativity pageants or plays portraying the Hanukkah miracle are not appropriate in the public school setting.

In short, while recognizing the holiday season, none of the school activities in December should have the purpose, or effect, of promoting or inhibiting religion.

There are, of course, many other times during the school year when questions may arise in connection with holidays. A common example is when parents from some

⁵"Religious Holidays in the Public Schools: Questions and Answers" may also be obtained free of charge through Americans United Research Foundation (see footnote 4). The quotes that follow are from this brochure.

religious traditions ask that their children be excused from classroom activities or discussions related to particular holidays, even when the holiday is being treated from an academic perspective. Such requests often extend to holidays considered by many people to be secular (e.g., Halloween) but are viewed by some religious groups as having religious implications.

Excusal requests involving activities or parties surrounding such holidays as Valentine's Day and Halloween are routinely granted. But what about requests for excusal from academic discussions of certain holidays? The guidelines read: "If focused on a limited, specific discussion, such requests may be granted in order to strike a balance between the student's religious freedom and the school's interest in providing a well-rounded education." Parents will also ask that students be excused to observe religious holidays within their traditions. School policies should take into account the religious needs and requirements of students by allowing a reasonable number of excused absences, without penalties, to observe religious holidays. The guidelines note, however: "Students may be asked to complete makeup assignments or examinations in conjunction with such absences."

These guidelines are only the starting point for the policies that must be developed in every school district. Some districts already have good policies, and many others have begun to build a similar consensus in their communities. New policies are being written on a local level from California to Maryland, which focus on what schools *can* do to identify and to encourage a proper role for religion in public education.

YES, BUT HOW?

General guidelines, of course, are only the first step. Now that there is widespread agreement that we should teach about religion, the question facing teachers is *how* do we do it? They are being asked to teach for the first time topics long ignored in the textbooks and controversial in the community. These teachers want and need straightforward advice on how to teach in this unfamiliar and sensitive terrain. The following answers to frequently asked questions offer practical approaches for meeting the challenges and avoiding the pitfalls of teaching about religion in a religiously diverse society.

When Should Teachers Talk About Religion and How Much Should They Say?

The best approach to discussions concerning religion is to place them within a historical and cultural context. Courses in history, literature, art and music on the elementary and secondary levels as well as discussions of family, community and instruction about holidays and cultures offer natural opportunities to teach about religious influences and themes.

How much is taught about the religion or religions of a particular historical period or culture, and decisions about which religions to include in the discussion, should always be determined by the academic requirements of the course. Teachers need teach only that which is essential to understanding the events or peoples under consideration.

Students should be made aware that their examination of religious traditions as part of their study of history and culture is necessarily limited. Teachers may find it

helpful to inform students as to why particular religious influences and themes have been chosen for study. Students also need to know that much more could be said about the complexity and richness of religious traditions. Alert them to the fact that there is a wide diversity of opinion about religious events and ideas, not only among the various religions, but also within the traditions themselves.

How May Teachers Teach About Religion in a Way That Is Fair and Balanced?

We have already noted that teaching about religion must be done in an environment free of indoctrination on the part of the teacher. While a variety of religious perspectives may be presented, no religious or anti-religious perspective should be advocated by the teacher. When discussing religious beliefs, teachers can avoid injecting personal bias by teaching through *attribution* (e.g., by reporting that "most Muslims believe . . .").

To be kept in mind is the principle that fair and balanced study about religion must involve critical thinking about religion in history. Religion has been an integral factor in some of the best and the worst events in history. The full historical record (and various interpretations of it) must be open to analysis and discussion. In this regard, it is preferable to use primary sources where possible, enabling students to directly encounter and interpret the historical record.

But study of destructive or oppressive acts carried out in the name of a religious belief are not to be opportunities for attacking the integrity of the religion itself. All religious traditions have tragic chapters in their story and historical incidents where the ideals of the faith were not fully lived. These parts of the historical record can be taught without condemning a particular religion or religion in general. Attacks by teachers on religion or on the theology or practice of any faith do not belong in a public school classroom.

Be careful to avoid making qualitative comparisons (e.g., religion A is superior to religion B). Structural comparisons, however, such as pointing out that most religious traditions have scriptures and community worship, may be a helpful way to organize class discussion. It may also be appropriate to compare and contrast the different perspectives religions might have on historical or current events.

What Are Some Common Pitfalls in Teaching About Religious Differences?

When teaching about religion, in an attempt to appear "tolerant" or "neutral," teachers sometimes, usually inadvertently, qualify religious truth claims as relative or reduce all religions to a common denominator—speaking of all religions as being "all the same" underneath their differences. For most religious people, however, such "toleration" distorts their faith and is anything but neutral. It matters very much to a Christian, a Jew or a Muslim what one takes to be ultimately true. These faiths, and many others, ascribe to absolute truths derived from the sources of revelation and authority in their traditions. The view that all faiths are ultimately the same may be compatible with some world views, but this is itself a philosophical or religious position. For a teacher to advocate this view in the classroom is a form of indoctrination.

Equally questionable are teachers' attempts to "explain away" religious faith as merely social or psychological phenomena. Such opinions may leave students with the impression that all truth claims are relative and that there are no absolutes. It is permissible to present various theories of religion and introduce students to

the social, economic and cultural context in which religions have formed and changed. It is first and foremost, however, essential to report how people of faith interpret their own practices and beliefs and how these beliefs have affected their lives historically—as well as how they affect people's lives today.

It is imperative that public school teachers remember that they are required to teach about the various approaches to truth without advocating one religious or philosophical position over another. Teaching respect for differences is uppermost in understanding beliefs of the world's religious traditions. By taking care not to reduce or portray as relative the truth claims of religions, the teacher allows the student to learn how each faith understands itself.

Should Teachers Have Students Role-play Religious Practices?

Re-creating religious practices or ceremonies through role-playing activities does not belong in a public school classroom. Such activities, no matter how carefully planned or well-intentioned, risk undermining the integrity of the faith involved. Religious ceremonies are sacred to those who practice them. Role-playing may unwittingly mock or, at the very least, oversimplify the religious meaning or intent of the ritual. Re-creating religious practices could violate the consciences of students asked to participate. A better approach is to use audiovisual resources and primary-source documents to introduce students to ceremonies and rituals of the world's religions.

What Should the Response Be When Students Ask the Teacher To Reveal His/Her Own Religious Beliefs?

Some teachers choose not to answer the question, stating that it is inappropriate for a teacher to inject personal beliefs into the discussion. Teachers of young children, in particular, have said they find this to be the most satisfactory response. Other teachers, not wishing to leave students guessing about their personal views, in the interest of maintaining an open and honest classroom environment, answer the question straightforwardly and succinctly.

The teacher who decides to answer the question by telling about his/her religious background should probably not do so at the beginning of the course or the year. Such questions are perhaps best answered once the teacher has had an opportunity to demonstrate how various religious and nonreligious perspectives may be taught with sensitivity and objectivity.

When answering the question about personal beliefs, a teacher may take the opportunity to say something like: "These are my personal beliefs, but my role here is to present fairly and sympathetically a variety of beliefs as we study the history of the world's great cultures. I only state my personal background so that you may better evaluate what I tell you."

Answering the question briefly, with little elaboration or discussion, may present a good lesson in civic values. Students learn that people with deep convictions are able to teach and learn about the convictions of others in ways that are fair and balanced.

How Should Religious Views of Students Be Handled in the Classroom?

It is unusual for teachers to solicit information about the religious affiliations or beliefs of students. Nor should students be asked to explain their faith or

religious practices to the class. Such requests put unfair pressure on students who may be reluctant to act as spokespersons for their tradition. Further, students may be unqualified or unprepared to represent their traditions accurately. Students may choose to express their own religious views during a class discussion or as part of a writing or art assignment, an appropriate choice as long as it is relevant to the subject under consideration and meets the requirements of the assignment.

It is the teacher's responsibility to make clear at the beginning of the course or topic the civic ground rules for class discussion. The first principles of rights, responsibilities and respect ought to be in place as part of the civic framework of every class. These civic values support a classroom environment conducive to exploring a broad range of ideas and views in a way that is both respectful and nonthreatening. Students learn that differences, even deepest differences, can be discussed with civility, and that ridicule and prejudice have no place in schools or society.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE IN THE CLASSROOM

The public schools of the United States urgently need lessons for classroom use that address the principles and problems of religious liberty in a pluralistic society. The most comprehensive attempt to fill this need is the curriculum project mentioned earlier, *Living with Our Deepest Differences: Religious Liberty in a Pluralistic Society*. Using historical documents, literature and creative teaching strategies, this curriculum translates the three Rs of religious liberty into lessons for upper elementary, junior and senior high school students. Extensive lessons on each level provide a civic framework for understanding the place of religion in public life and demonstrate how practical dilemmas can be answered in terms of tolerance and mutual respect rather than bigotry and violence.

Living with Our Deepest Differences came about after leading educators asked the Williamsburg Charter Foundation, a nonpartisan, nonsectarian, nonprofit organization, to develop classroom materials that would teach the democratic first principles of rights, responsibilities and respect. A distinguished and diverse group of educators, scholars and faith community leaders served on the Editorial Review Board, chaired by Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

More than 150 teachers field-tested the curriculum during the fall of 1989 in five states (California, Maryland, Michigan, New York and North Carolina). Most of the teachers in the pilot program reported that the curriculum was an excellent resource for teaching tolerance, understanding and appreciation for differences within the civic framework of religious liberty.

A response that typifies the enthusiasm and success of the pilot teachers came from Monica Glynn, a 5th-grade teacher in Portola, California. Monica infused her social studies teaching throughout the year with materials from *Living with Our Deepest Differences*. She tied the historical lessons of religious liberty to current events and connected the principles of religious liberty to other rights protected by the Bill of Rights.

Monica Glynn teaches in a classroom rich in ethnic and religious diversity. She used the historical documents and stories in the curriculum to help students understand how living with differences has been a continuing challenge and exciting opportunity for the nation. In the first lesson of the curriculum, for example, which

focuses on the first Jews to arrive in America, Monica encouraged her students to think about who the "pilgrims" are today in the United States. She connected the struggle for liberty and economic security of today's newest Americans to the longings and motivations of immigrants throughout U.S. history.

She reports that her students began to see each other with new appreciation and respect. They were able, as she described it, "to put their feet in someone else's shoes" and to learn that "differences are special." Some of her students (a Mexican-American boy, for example) who have sometimes felt stigmatized, saw *themselves* with new respect.

Another aspect of the curriculum that excited students in Monica's classroom was the use of historical documents that encourage students to identify themselves with the people and stories of early American history. (All the lessons are history-based and contain primary source materials for distribution to the students.) Documents as well as stories, speeches, poems and songs help to make history personal and immediate.

The "legacy" section of each lesson, which links the historical setting and its contemporary relevance, was used by Monica "to bring the lesson home" in a discussion of current events. Themes of religious liberty and American pluralism in history come alive when students understand the connection of the nation's story to the principles that sustain the United States today as one nation of many faiths. On each grade level, lessons remind students of what is at stake in maintaining religious liberty principles. One of the "interest hooks" on the middle school level is a chart showing that 25 of the 32 wars currently being waged in the world are rooted in religious and ethnic conflicts.

Each lesson also has a "parent connection," an opportunity to involve parents in the process of reinforcing ideas taught in class. They are asked to participate in the discussion by working with their children to extend the themes of the lesson. Before making these connections with parents through the lessons, Monica explained *Living with Our Deepest Differences* to parents at "Back to School" night and built strong community support.

RESOURCES FOR THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

Living with Our Deepest Differences is the most extensive curriculum available on religious liberty and freedom of conscience and one of the few new projects with lessons for upper elementary as well as for junior and senior high school students. For more information about the curriculum, contact the publisher by writing to Learning Connections Publishers, Inc., P.O. Box 6007, Boulder, CO 80306-6007.

Three recent books provide excellent lessons for teaching about religion in United States history. Although most of the lessons in these publications are designed for grades 7-12, many may also be used in grades 5 and 6.

Pathways to Pluralism: Religious Issues in American Culture contains 10 studies of significant religious issues in American history. Primary source materials are used in every lesson to present a variety of perspectives and to promote critical thinking. The authors, Robert Spivey, Edwin Gaustad and Rodney Allen, have provided an accom-

panying teacher's guide with learning objectives, background material, teaching strategies and research topics. The book and guide are available from Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 2725 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

My own book, *Religion in American History: What To Teach and How*, contains a guide to using archival documents to teach about religion and extensive historical background on the issues raised by the documents. I provide 13 facsimiles of primary source documents that may be easily reproduced for students (the book is spiral bound). Such documents as letters from Presidents Washington, Jefferson and Roosevelt, a Shaker diary, a nativist petition and a letter from an African-American church to the Freeman's Bureau, all focus on the role of religion in the story of the nation. Included is a list of 29 major religious influences in U.S. history as identified by Dr. Timothy Smith and a panel of historians and teachers. The publisher is the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1250 N. Pitt St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

Twenty-one classroom activities for teaching about religious events and related issues in U.S. history are contained in *The Role of Religion in U.S. History* by Robert LaRue, Jaye Zola and John Zola. Complete lesson plans, including teaching strategies and reproducible student handout sheets, cover a wide range of issues from "Native American Religions" to "A Religious Perspective on Nuclear War." This looseleaf-bound book is available from Hal Clarke, Inc. Publishers, P.O. Box 7311, Boulder, CO 80306.

Teachers who wish to give adequate attention to the religions of the world when teaching social studies should have a reference book available that explains the basic concepts of the world's major religious traditions. Robert S. Ellwood's *Many Peoples, Many Faiths* and the companion anthology *Words of the World's Religions* (Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977) are good examples of books that can help teachers supplement the discussion of world cultures in the student textbooks.

Every teacher, especially in the elementary grades, would do well to have a calendar of religious holidays and ethnic festivals. Holidays and festivals can be valuable opportunities for introducing information about religions and cultures throughout the school year. Such a calendar also alerts teachers to the religious traditions of their students and to the observances that may result in student absences. The National Conference of Christians and Jews (71 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003) publishes a three-year calendar marking key religious and ethnic holidays. More elaborate calendars with photographs, "Ethnic Cultures of America Calendar" and "The World Calendar," are published each year by Educational Extension Systems (P.O. Box 259, Clarks Summit, PA 18411).

Curriculum guides, sample lessons, bibliographies and other resources for teaching about world religions are available from the Distribution Center of the National Council on Religion and Public Education. *Religion and Public Education*, NCRPE's journal, is a clearinghouse for information about new curriculum resources and contains a variety of articles concerning the interaction of religion and education. For more information about the Distribution Center and the journal, write: National Council on Religion and Public Education, N162 Lagomarcino Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS

Even with the best curriculum materials in hand, many teachers do not feel fully prepared to teach about religion or to deal with religious differences among their students. Little is said about religion in most teacher education programs, and state mandates to include more discussion of various religions and cultures are not always matched by preservice and inservice workshops.

Fortunately, new teacher institutes and workshops focused on religion are being developed in a number of states. The State Department of Education in Georgia, for example, has undertaken a three-year project in religious liberty education that promises to prepare teachers throughout the state to handle issues concerning religious liberty and religion in the classroom. In other states, colleges and universities are initiating new courses on teaching about religion in public schools.

On the national level, four organizations offer programs for teachers that may be used to learn more about religion and religious liberty:

Americans United Research Foundation sponsors a summer institute (and graduate course) that focuses on the history and significance of religious liberty in the United States. Teachers from every region of the country participate in the two-week program held just outside Washington, D.C. The foundation also publishes an instructional guide for teaching religious liberty. For more information, write to Regina Hayden, Assistant Project Director, Americans United Research Foundation, 900 Silver Spring Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910.

The First Liberty Institute at George Mason University has been designated as the national teacher training center for *Living with Our Deepest Differences: Religious Liberty in a Pluralistic Society*. In addition to providing workshops in support of this curriculum, First Liberty offers institutes throughout the country designed to prepare teachers to teach about religion and religious liberty and to handle controversies concerning religion in the schools. To find out more about these programs, contact John Seel, First Liberty Institute at George Mason University, Robinson Hall #3307, 4400 University Dr., Fairfax, VA 22030.

The National Archives gives a workshop each summer on the use of primary sources in the classroom. A number of teachers use their time at the Archives to investigate and collect documents on the role of religion in American history. The Archives and its 11 field branches offer many additional services that support the use of documents in teaching. For details about the summer workshop and other programs, write to Elsie T. Freeman, Chief, Education Branch, NEE, National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408.

The National Endowment for the Humanities offers a variety of grants for teachers that may be used to learn more about religions. The Independent Study in the Humanities program involves a \$3,000 grant to elementary or secondary school classroom teachers to conduct a six-week summer independent study in the humanities. Grants between \$2,000 and \$2,500 are given to teachers to participate in 4-6 week summer seminars on specific topics in the humanities, including religion. Master workshop study grants are \$5,000 - \$30,000 grants for schools to conduct faculty-study and curriculum-development activities related to humanities education. For further information, as well as for proposal writing assistance, contact Carl Dolan, Coordinator,

Access to Excellence Program, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Room 802, Washington, D.C. 20506.

WE THE PEOPLE

The present offers a strategic opportunity to open the curriculum and the schools to the rich diversity of national life. Our task is to teach and learn in ways that respect religious distinctiveness while affirming a civic consensus. Toleration and respect for differences within the civic framework of religious liberty are at the heart of good citizenship and central to the mission of public education. In the words of the Williamsburg Charter:

Commitment to democratic pluralism assumes the coexistence within one political community of groups whose ultimate faith commitments may be incompatible, yet whose common commitment to social unity and diversity does justice to both the requirements of individual conscience and the wider community. A general consent to the obligations of citizenship is therefore inherent in the American experiment, both as a founding principle ("We the people") and as a matter of daily practice. (The Williamsburg Charter is reprinted in Hunter & Guinness, 1990, p. 141)

Learning to live with our differences by returning to first principles is a challenge we have faced in every critical period of the nation's history. Two hundred years ago, as Americans first struggled to shape their national identity, President George Washington stated as well as anyone before or since the vision of a democratic society that respects diversity and protects freedom of conscience for people of all faiths or none. His statement came in reply to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island. The congregation had written to express their gratitude, as a people long persecuted and dispossessed, for the "invaluable rights of free citizens." Washington's reply serves as a timeless reminder of how much is at stake as we reaffirm and renew the American experiment in liberty in the nation's classrooms. He wrote:

The Citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy: a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support

May the Children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and figtree, and there shall be none to make him afraid. May the father of all mercies scatter light and not darkness in our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in his own due time and way everlastingly happy. (Haynes, 1990, p. 30)

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Ability Differences in the Classroom: Teaching and Learning in Inclusive Classrooms

Mara Sapon-Shevin

Although we may talk about a classroom as "the kindergarten" or "the 3rd grade" and may anticipate similarities in the skills and interests of chronologically similar students, all classrooms are actually heterogeneous. Typical classrooms have always served students who varied in a number of ways, including performance or ability. Many schools are now moving toward ever more *purposive* heterogeneity, attempting to limit the negative effects of tracking and recognizing the value of teaching children to interact comfortably with a wide range of people. This philosophy, known as full inclusion (Stainback & Stainback, 1990), is the outgrowth of the mainstreaming movement and represents a commitment to creating schools and classrooms in which all children, regardless of individual educational needs or disabilities, are educated together.

Inclusive classrooms attempt to honor and respond to the many kinds of diversity children bring to the classroom. Differences in race, ethnicity, gender, family background, religion are not dismissed as inconsistent, but are appreciated and become part of the curriculum itself. Inclusive classrooms must also address differences in what is typically called "ability." Although one can never accurately predict any child's full potential or ultimate performance, children do differ in the skills, knowledge and competence they bring to the classroom. In traditional classrooms, these differences may lead to children's assignment to different reading or math groups or may result in their being identified as "learning disabled" or "gifted." In reality, all children have abilities and strengths as well as areas in which they require more intensive instruction. As educators, we must make decisions about how to respond to these differences in educationally and ethically appropriate ways.

What are the challenges of teaching in classrooms that educate children who read well alongside those who do not read at all, children who learn quickly and easily with traditional methods and those who need intensive instruction or alternative strategies? Here we explore these topics by first discussing some myths about ability differences and ability grouping that often perpetuate rigid, dysfunctional ways of teaching and organizing for instruction. I contrast these beliefs with the realities of heterogeneity and mixed-ability groups and explore some ways classrooms and instruction can be organized, concluding with a list of resources for implementing inclusive teaching.

MYTHS ABOUT ABILITY AND ABILITY GROUPING

There Is Such a Thing as Ability

Many educators believe that each child has some fixed "ability level" that defines the best he/she can possibly do. Thus, we talk about children "not working up to ability" and sometimes, ironically, "overachieving" (that is, doing better than we predicted they would). Basing our actions on these perceived differences, we label children as "smart," "average" or "slow" or, for children whose differences appear more salient, "gifted" or "handicapped." We often adjust our curricula and expectations accordingly. In actuality, all people, including all children, vary along a number of dimensions, and it is generally not helpful to talk about ability as if it were a fixed, immutable potential for achievement. How well any child does is a function of many variables, including the nature of the curriculum, the child's self-concept, the flexibility and support of those who surround the child and the child's interest in the task. Therefore, if conditions were right, *we could all do better!* As Hunt (1961, p. 346) noted:

It is highly unlikely that any society has developed a system of child rearing and education that maximizes the potential of the individuals which compose it. Probably no individual has ever lived whose full potential for happy intellectual interest and growth has been achieved.

Therefore, in some ways, we are all *underachievers*, and it makes sense for teachers to find ways to help all children achieve more and to create classrooms that nurture and support diversity.

Students Learn Better in Homogeneous Groups

Some teachers still believe that, by "narrowing the range" of abilities in the classroom, children will learn better because tasks will be more appropriate. Actually, despite the fact that many teachers continue to group students by ability, overwhelming research results suggest that homogeneous grouping does not consistently help anyone learn more or better (Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 1990; Oakes, 1985). In fact, organizing children into high-, average- and low-ability groups actually *creates* differences in what children learn by exposing them to different kinds of material. Although some children in high-ability groups may benefit from such arrangements, those who lose the most are those placed in average- and low-ability groups. Such grouping practices tend to compound further racial, ethnic and economic differences in schools, as poor children and children of color are least likely to be served in enriched, gifted or high-ability tracks and are more likely to end up in vocational or low-ability groups.

Ability grouping also takes a serious toll on children's self-concepts and their opportunities to form meaningful relationships across groups. Children in the "slow group," the "low reading group" or what gets labeled as the "dumb class" are often painfully aware of the limited expectations adults have for them and are often subjected to teasing, ridicule and humiliation. Similarly, children who are put in top groups or labeled and removed to gifted classes are often labeled as "brains" or "nerds" and may find themselves isolated. Grouping children creates distance among them and tends to amplify and solidify whatever actual differences originally existed.



43

41

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Teaching Is Easier in Homogeneous Groups

For teachers who have always organized instruction around three reading groups or a high-math group and a low-math group, homogeneous grouping feels comfortable and familiar. But teachers who group homogeneously also complain about a lack of time to meet individual needs and about the low motivation and involvement levels of some of their students. By grouping heterogeneously for instruction, especially using models like cooperative learning and peer tutoring where children learn to help one another, teachers often find that teaching becomes more enjoyable (Sapon-Shevin, 1990). When heterogeneous teaching models are working well, children receive the benefit of peer instruction and motivation, and the teacher's role shifts from management to instruction. Many teachers report livelier, more involved students and more challenging and exciting teaching experiences.

Children Are Cruel and Cannot Accept Differences

All of us have seen children teased and tormented because of their differences: "four-eyes," "metal mouth," "dummy" and "fatso." But children also have tremendous capacity to become friends, allies, supportive and nurturing peers with classmates who are different from them. We also know that children cannot develop understandings, appreciation and skills in interacting with peers who are different if they are kept isolated and segregated. But more contact is not enough to promote positive responses to differences. Teachers must systematically address student differences and appropriate interaction with their students and structure learning activities that encourage positive social interaction.

Parents Support Homogeneous Grouping and Tracking

Because many societal messages tell us that differences are bad and that people who are different must live and be educated separately, it is no wonder that many parents accept homogeneous grouping and the segregation of children who are different. Increasingly, however, parents of children labeled as "handicapped" have challenged the practice of placing their children in separate, isolated schools or classrooms. These parents want their children to grow up as part of the community in which they live, and this means going to school and playing with chronological peers, brothers, sisters and neighborhood friends. Many parents of "typical" children have also come to support integration or full inclusion within schools (Stainback & Stainback, 1990). This is particularly true as they see their children becoming comfortable with, and knowledgeable about, disabilities and differences. Even parents who were initially concerned that the presence of children with educational challenges would "dilute" their child's education have noted that, when conscientiously implemented, inclusive, regular classrooms do not lose any of their "rigor" but become more flexible, accommodating learning environments for all children.

What about the responses of parents whose children have been labeled "gifted" and educated in segregated gifted programs? These parents are often in discord; while they certainly want their child's educational and intellectual needs to be met and their child to feel accepted and valued, their choices may be constrained. Some parents feel (rightfully) that their child's unique needs cannot be met in the typical, workbook-oriented, lock-stepped classroom and that removal to a special class is the only solution. Other parents, however, worry about separating their child from his/her

classmates and do not want their child to feel stigmatized or overly different from other children. If and when parents can be shown "regular" classrooms that can meet the individual needs of their child and do so within an inclusive, accepting classroom community, the potential for their support for heterogeneous grouping will be enhanced.

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

In order for teachers to teach and students to learn in heterogeneous classrooms, considerable attention must be given to classroom organization, curriculum design and community building. What kinds of teaching strategies are most appropriate and successful in heterogeneous classrooms? How can students learn to accept and understand one another's differences?

Cooperative Learning

When children with different abilities are being taught in the same classroom, one of the optimum ways to teach is through cooperative learning, which involves organizing instruction so that children work together, helping each other to learn. Of the many structured systems of cooperative learning, one method called Jigsaw (Aronson, 1978) involves dividing material to be learned into five or six parts and assigning students to heterogeneous five- or six-member teams. Each student is responsible for learning and then teaching his/her portion of the material to the whole team. Members of different groups who have been assigned the same portion of material meet in "expert groups" to study and discuss their own section. Because all group members are responsible for all the material, all students must help each other learn; no one can sit back without participating.

The Jigsaw Method can be used to teach many things: one 2nd-grade teacher assigns groups of five; each group member gets two of the week's 10 spelling words to teach to the rest of the group. A 5th-grade teacher had different group members learn and then teach different parts of the unit on Africa. The groups included members who specialized in the music, art, food, geography and history of the region. Paula Boilard, a band teacher, divided her jazz band into groups that became "experts" in the rhythm, dynamics, articulation and melody of a new piece. Because the clarinetist, who was one of the rhythm experts, had to learn the rhythm for all the other instruments as well as her own, she had a much better sense of how the whole piece fit together. The band's harmony was increased in many ways!

Another way of organizing the classroom for cooperative learning is sometimes called "Learning Together" (Johnson & Johnson, 1975). The teacher assigns heterogeneous groups of students to produce a single product as a group. The teacher arranges the classroom to facilitate peer interaction, provides appropriate materials, constructs and explains the task so that it requires group cooperation, observes the students' interactions and intervenes as necessary. Students might be placed with a partner, for example, and asked to do a complex math problem. All members of the partnership must be able to explain the answer; they cannot say, "Because Mike said the answer is 34." Therefore, higher-level students must work with and teach lower-level students. Larger groups of four or five might be asked to produce a skit, with different group members assigned to the writing, directing and acting, or to write a cooperative report.

Within this method, considerable emphasis is placed on teaching group members appropriate social skills to facilitate smooth interaction and cooperation, which can be done in various ways. Sometimes, one student in the group functions as the observer and records the various facilitative behaviors of the group members: he/she might note, for example, how often each member talks, encourages others, asks questions or clarifies. At the end of the session, the observer shares this information with the group, so that all students can begin to understand which behaviors help a group succeed and how these behaviors can be developed.

An alternative way to build appropriate group social skills is to assign tasks to each group member. If the group's task, for example, is to generate a list of ways the school could recycle waste products, one group member might be assigned the role of recorder (writing down what people say), one the role of encourager (making sure that everyone contributes), one the role of clarifier (making sure that everyone agrees with and understands what has been written) and one the role of reporter (sharing with the large group what has been recorded). With these roles described, each one on a different card, the teacher would engage students in lessons on how to do each task: "What are some ways you could encourage other people in your group?" or "What are some clarifying questions you could ask your group members?"

In less formal ways, teachers can encourage class-wide cooperation. A 4th-grade teacher implemented what she called the "family rule." Students were seated in clusters of four desks; the rule was that no one in the group could ask the teacher a question unless he/she had first checked with everyone else in the group. The teacher was relieved from an endless stream of questions and students began to take active responsibility not only for helping classmates find the right page, figure out the worksheet instructions or spell a difficult word, but they began to see each other as resources in many other ways as well. The teacher reported that children who were worried or upset about other issues (e.g., lost lunch money, a bully on the playground, a sick puppy at home) began to turn to one another for comfort and support.

Teachers also encourage support and cooperation by putting children in charge of more classroom activities. In some classrooms, students take roll, do the lunch count, decorate bulletin boards, make decisions about scheduling concerns and inform classroom visitors. By providing ample opportunities for children to exercise leadership and make choices, the teachers enable children to come to see one another as more than "the worst reader" or "the best math student."

Peer Tutoring

Another way to address different skill levels within a class is to arrange for children to be resources to one another, such as through peer tutoring or peer teaching. This can be arranged on many different levels, both within classrooms and across grade levels. In one school, every 6th-grader has a 1st-grade math "buddy" with whom he/she works three times a week. This system not only provides extensive one-on-one instruction for the 1st-graders, but the 6th-grade teacher has reported that even the "worst" math students in the 6th grade are showing renewed interest and enthusiasm for mathematics. She reported she has seen some 6th-graders doing extra work to prepare for their teaching so that they would "be sure to get it right." In other schools, 1st-graders read regularly to 2nd-graders who listen appreciatively, and

6th-graders assist in the integration process of children with special needs. Teachers report that when students are involved in the process of integration, incidents of teasing virtually disappear, and any infractions are dealt with by the other students. "Don't make fun of Jim, he has cerebral palsy and he talks fine and we understand him," would be a typical remark.

Patty Feld, a teacher in a small rural school, organizes her students to help one another. Several times a week, the children have what she calls SHOA (Students Helping One Another). For a designated period, children work together in pairs, with one child being responsible for helping the other; half the time Patty decides what the pair will work on; at other times, the student being helped is allowed to decide what kind of help he/she wants. All students read books at their own level, and there is a book-sharing time weekly, when students tell each other about what they are reading and learning. All students benefit from one another's learning, and reading-level differences are minimized by the cooperative sharing.

Teachers can in different ways arrange for students to help one another and become educational resources and sources of support. One teacher with a new record player was eager to ensure that all students learned to operate it properly. She taught one little boy all about the machine. He learned which part was the tone arm, where the volume was adjusted and how to operate the machine gently. He was then asked to teach two other children during the day and to check their success in learning the process. These two then taught two more, until the whole class had been instructed. The teacher reported that not only was the record player carefully attended at all times, but that by structuring situations where "high achievers" got lessons from nonreaders, some of the classroom dynamics had shifted.

The typical hierarchy was gently subverted. Another 5th-grade teacher kept four students in at recess to learn a difficult craft project, then had each student work with his/her table companions to complete the project. Students saw one another in a new light. New respect was created for children who were not typically "stars" in the class.

If peer teaching or peer tutoring is to address some of the typical status hierarchies within classrooms, teachers must be sure that each child gets a chance to be the teacher or the leader and that no one is stuck permanently in the role of receiving help. A way to make this happen is to broaden the kinds of activities and projects for children throughout the school year. One teacher created a *Classroom Yellow Pages* listing children's names, their areas of "expertise" and ways in which they were willing to provide assistance to classmates. The guide included entries such as:

□ LaDonna Smith; jump-rope songs and jingles; willing to teach double-dutch jumping and crossing over to anyone interested.

□ Miguel Hernandez; baseball-card collector; can show interested people how to start a collection, special cards to look for, and how to figure batting averages and statistics.

By encouraging students to look beyond some of the typical school subjects according to which children may rank and evaluate themselves and each other, she created new areas of interest, promoted peer interaction and broke existing stereotypes about "who was smart and who wasn't."

Multilevel Teaching

To teach a wide range of students within one classroom, teachers need to rethink not only how they teach, but also what they teach. Instead of assuming that all students will be engaged in identical learning experiences for the same unit and evaluated according to the same criteria, the curriculum can instead be conceptualized as broad and inclusive. For example, if the class is doing a unit on Space, the teacher can organize activities and projects related to the space theme, but at many different levels. Children who have exceptional reading and research skills might be asked to write a report on origins of the galaxy. Other children might be asked to draw and label the major planets in the solar system. A child with limited language skills might be required to be able to point to pictures of the sun, the moon and the earth in different arrangements. All class participants would be asked to share their completed projects with the whole group, so that everyone might benefit from the diversity of activities.

In a classroom containing both students identified as "gifted" and students labeled as "mentally retarded," the teacher set up a school sandwich store, which took teachers' orders for Friday's lunch and delivered their orders on that day. All class members were involved in the project, but at different levels. Some children calculated prices according to ingredient costs; others figured out state and "classroom tax"; others did the actual shopping. Students whose educational objectives included functional skills, such as meal preparation, worked to make the sandwiches. Others were involved in generating publicity and issuing a monthly business report. By constructing a project like this, the teacher was able to engage all students in a collaborative project and still meet the educational needs of individuals.

Teachers need continually to challenge the traditional curriculum and ask: What does each child need to know? What aspects of this unit can be modified or adapted? Can students participate in the same activity with different levels of evaluation and involvement, or does an alternate, related activity need to be provided?

By asking these questions, teachers may find that they can achieve more flexibility for the whole class and that modifications made with a particular student in mind end up benefiting many students. Patty Feld implements multilevel instruction by teaching across modalities; Patty says that by including reading, writing, drawing and movement in her lessons, she is able to address age differences and skill differences among her students. Classroom posters say, "We encourage our friends," and Patty tells students that questions are always okay. She not only encourages question-asking, but turns those questions back to the group. She says she has learned to ask open-ended questions without right/wrong answers and to wait for multiple answers. Often a child who has not jumped into the discussion immediately later makes a contribution that enriches the conversation. From incidents such as these other students observe and learn there are many ways to be smart.

Another teacher assigned one student a day to take a set of notes for the class (a carbon copy of personal notes) to meet the needs of a deaf student who could not take notes. This teacher found later that these notes were also helpful to students with learning problems who could not both listen and take notes, students whose handwriting left them with "holes" in their notes and students who were absent and needed to catch up. Another teacher, on the advice of the learning-disabilities teacher, began writing key words on the board and teaching them before beginning a new lesson. She found that all students benefited from this pre-teaching motivation and

organization. Another teacher, in helping one student get himself organized by teaching him to use an assignment notebook and to check with peers for assignments, found that many students could use a similar system to keep themselves on task and on track. Making classroom modification and adaptations benefits children's learning and demonstrates that we care about all students. We do not neglect those children having difficulties.

Teaching Social Skills

To make cooperative learning and peer tutoring effective, many teachers find they need to address social skills directly, such as instructing children in ways to praise, ways to encourage, and how to resolve conflicts. One way of teaching appropriate skills is by engaging all students in a unit on giving and receiving help. Students can explore and practice ways of offering help ("Can I help you?" rather than "Let me do that, you're too short-dumb-slow") and ways of accepting and declining help gracefully ("No thanks, I'm doing fine," rather than "What do you think I am, dumb or something?"). These are repertoires all persons need, not simply those whose skills are more limited. Teachers can help students reflect on questions such as the following:

- ☐ What are three things I'm really good at?
- ☐ What are three things I have trouble with?
- ☐ What are some ways I can provide help to people?
- ☐ What are some things I need help with, and what kind of help would I like?

By generating answers in this way, students and the teacher can see that everyone has skills and abilities, that everyone needs help in certain areas. Karen may be a whiz as a reader, but she may need help fitting into playground games. Carmen may struggle with her math, but she's great at remembering things and getting people and activities organized. Classrooms can become communities of mutual support if teachers promote respect for differences and provide multiple opportunities for students to see each other in many ways.

Patty Feld, whose students are diverse, says that having a heterogeneous group is "a lot more like life," and she enjoys the interplay among different children. Patty addresses differences with her students directly. When some children wanted to play basketball, she engaged the students in a discussion of how they might equalize the teams so that it would be fairer and more fun for all; they also discussed ways of encouraging each other to play better. Students who had more skills spent part of each gym period working with those whose skills were more limited.

When children are working closely together, conflicts will inevitably arise, and children need to learn ways of resolving such conflicts. One teacher has set aside a walk-in closet in her class where children in conflict could take themselves—not be sent—when having a conflict and needing some time and space to work it out. Another teacher has initiated what she calls the *Problem Pail*. Any students having a conflict can write what happened on a slip of paper and put it in the pail. Twice a week, she gathers the class together and fishes "problems" out of the pail. Each person involved in the conflict gets a chance, without interruption, to tell what happened. Then, the whole class is invited to suggest possible solutions or strategies for resolving the problem. She says she is often told when she fishes out a problem, "Oh, we already

worked that out." Sometimes students come to the pail and remove a slip of paper because it no longer applies. With tattling removed as an option, some problems simply dissipate because it is too much trouble to write them down. She reports that the class keeps charts and problem solutions to be referred to when similar issues arise. She is able to say, "What did we do last time something like this came up?" On their own, students often refer to these charts, a classroom compendium of solutions to conflict.

Teaching About Differences

Some teachers mistakenly assume that if they do not talk about ways in which children in their class differ—don't comment on the fact that Mark reads more slowly, that Carlos talks with difficulty or that Wei-Ming finishes math problems before anyone else—they will somehow avoid the comparisons and competitive evaluations in which children often engage. In truth, the opposite is more likely. When teachers do not directly address differences in skills and abilities, students receive the message that certain things simply cannot be talked about; their discomfort is likely to be increased. How should teachers handle the differences in their classrooms?

First, teachers need to be careful not to give negative messages about differences. Star charts on the wall telling all who enter who is doing well and who is doing badly are not conducive to creating a classroom community that respects diversity. Most forms of competition in the classroom—spelling bees, awards for the "best team" and voting on the best essay—should be eliminated. Such competition is damaging not only to the student who does poorly ("We don't want Michael on our math team, we had him last week"), but also to students who consistently do well ("She thinks she's so smart just 'cause she got done faster than everyone else"). A good rule of thumb is this: if a visitor to the classroom can tell from the bulletin boards, the seating arrangement or the wall charts who is doing "better" and who is "in trouble," then it is certain that children as well are painfully aware of those differences and comparisons. Bulletin boards to which all children contribute something, student choices of which paper they would like to hang up for display and flexible and inclusive room arrangements are far more consistent with building respect for differences.

Avoiding negative comparison, however, is only the first step, and it is far from enough. Teachers must find multiple opportunities to talk about and honor children's differences. When one kindergarten class integrated a girl with physical seizures, no language and severe motor difficulties, the teacher engaged the children in identifying Maria's limitations and discussing how they could accommodate and include her. The children themselves figured out ways she could participate in games, which aspects of the reading lesson she might be able to do, and how they could see to it that she was included in social activities throughout the day and on the weekend.

When children are aware that individual differences are supported in a noncompetitive classroom environment, they are free to celebrate the successes of their classmates without comparison. In one classroom I entered, a student rushed up to me and said, "Craig just got a new reading book and he can read real stories now!" Although the child who informed me of Craig's accomplishment had himself been reading for years, he was able to recognize that getting a "real book" was an important milestone for Craig. Confident in his own success and supported for his own accomplishments,

he understood that every child in the room was working on what he/she needed in order to learn.

Teachers with heterogeneous classrooms, who attempt to individualize instruction to meet children's needs, will often be asked at first, "How come Noah doesn't do the same math we do?" or "When will I get to work on the computer like Nicole does?" The ways in which teachers respond will do much to set the tone of the classroom; generally speaking, honest, forthright answers seem best. "Noah works in a different book because he's working on addition, and he's not ready for multiplication yet," or "Let's find a time when you can work with Nicole on the computer." Most who teach in inclusive classrooms report that, after a short time, children accept the fact that others may be working on different levels or materials, and they often assist other students when they can. When needing help is not stigmatized but seen as a common, natural occurrence and when giving help is regarded as a valuable, also natural occurrence, then children can be accommodating of one another's challenges and appreciative of their accomplishments.

Promoting positive responses to diversity also means interrupting inappropriate responses swiftly and directly: "It's not right to call other people 'stupid'—what else could you say to Karen?" Teachers who tolerate name-calling and put-downs give children the clear message that such behavior is acceptable or even inevitable. It is important that all educators consider carefully their own values regarding differences and what they want to convey to students.

There are many excellent curricula for teaching about differences, some of which are included in the resource list at the end of this chapter. Students certainly need to know about ways in which they differ in terms of skills, abilities and interests. But it is equally important to have students discover ways in which they are alike. Stressing differences without talking about similarities can give students the idea that there is no common ground upon which to build relationships. When teachers are discussing student differences—who is good at what, who has trouble and so forth—they must also talk about the fact that all students are in school to learn, all persons have things they are good at and things they are not, and all do better with encouragement and support.

THINKING ABOUT INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Creating inclusive classrooms involves considering what things are taught, how they are taught and how interactions are structured among students. If children are to get consistent messages about the positive nature of diversity and the need for inclusiveness, all aspects of classroom life must reflect that commitment.

The Curriculum

Think critically about the kinds of available display materials in the room. Do they reflect the principle that we all belong and can all contribute? Just as teachers will want to include books, posters and information about people of color and of various ethnic backgrounds in their classrooms, materials about people with differences and disabilities should be included and integrated into all aspects of the curriculum. A unit on the five senses, for example, can include information on blindness and

hearing impairments. A unit on fairy tales can include a discussion of "differently abled" characters, such as the Ugly Duckling or Rumpelstiltskin, and a discussion of labeling and stereotyping. A unit on architecture can include information about physical accessibility to buildings and vehicles and barrier-free designs.

Language

How do we talk about differences? Do we imply that it is better to be "all the same," or is there a value attached to diversity? How do teachers refer to the resource room, how and how much do they explain some children's being chosen for the gifted program, and how do they respond to children who are struggling or failing? Children can also learn to be critical of stereotypes and misinformation about differences and disabilities. One teacher had students bring in cartoons containing words like "idiot" and "imbecile" and led a discussion about "smartness" and "stupidity" and how we should respond to such words and concepts.

Our Own Relationships with People Who Are Different

Does the teacher exemplify respect for, and inclusion of, people who are different within his/her own life? It is hard to talk about the importance of including persons who think or learn differently if this commitment is not represented in your own life as a teacher. Some teachers who tolerate teasing and exclusion of children who are different are still working through their own past experiences in which they were excluded from various groups. Gaining some clarity about the damaging ways in which we all were excluded periodically (or consistently) can be an important first step in helping students understand exclusion. As we work to get ourselves, as teachers, surrounded by the networks of support we need, we can be more effective in helping our students do the same.

CONCLUSION

For classrooms to be inclusive, modeling respect and appreciation for all children, the areas identified in this chapter must inform all aspects of classroom life. Children learn what they live; if they are segregated by ability and skill for most of the day, an hour's lesson on respecting diversity is not likely to have a major impact. The typical school day or year provides multiple opportunities to problem-solve issues of inclusiveness. When one 5th-grade class that included a vegetarian child, a child who kept Kosher and a child who was Muslim wanted to plan refreshments for their party, the children brainstormed food choices that would allow all the children to eat comfortably. When a child using a wheelchair was not strong enough to lift himself out of his chair, the whole class became involved in a fitness and muscle-building unit to improve upper-body strength. The messages in these classrooms are consistent: we are a community; we are all in this together; we will take responsibility for one another; we won't abandon people because of their difference or difficulties.

RESOURCES

There are many excellent resources available for both teaching children about differences and disabilities and for structuring cooperative, inclusive classroom teaching.

Resource Guides for Cooperative Learning and Inclusive Teaching

These books are helpful in thinking about organizing instruction and curriculum to promote positive peer interactions and the inclusion of children of various ability levels.

- Aronson, E. (1978). *The jigsaw classroom*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Dishon, D., & O'Leary, P. W. (1984). *A guidebook for cooperative learning: A technique for creating more effective schools*. Holmes Beach, FL: Learning Publications.
- Gibbs, J. (1978). *Tribes: A process for social development and cooperative learning*. Santa Rosa, CA: Center Source Publications.
- Johnson, D., & Johnson, R. (1975). *Learning together and alone*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kagan, S. (1985). *Cooperative learning: Resources for teachers*. Riverside, CA: University of California, School of Education.
- Moorman, C., & Dishon, D. (1983). *Our classroom: We can learn together*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Schniedewind, N., & Davidson, E. (1987). *Cooperative learning, cooperative lives: A sourcebook of learning activities for building a peaceful world*. Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown.

Resources for Creative Conflict Resolution and Class Climate

These books are helpful in thinking about issues of management, discipline and conflict resolution, all of which may require a different, more thoughtful approach in classrooms that are purposively heterogeneous.

- Kreidler, W. J. (1984). *Creative conflict resolution*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.
- Prutzman, P., Burger, M. L., Bodenhamer, G. & Stern, L. (1978). *The friendly classroom for a small planet: A handbook on creative approaches to living and problem solving for children*. Wayne, NJ: Avery Publishing.

Resources on Cooperative Play and Games

These books are helpful in organizing recreation and play so that children who are at different levels of skill can all have fun, with suggestions for games and play that are inclusive and promote positive social interaction.

- Fluegelman, A. (1976). *The new games book*. Garden City, NY: Dolphin.
- Orlick, T. (1978). *The cooperative sports and games book: Challenge without competition*. New York: Pantheon.
- Sobel, J. (1983). *Everybody wins: Non-competitive games for young children*. New York: Walker and Company.
- Weinstein, M., & Goodman, J. (1980). *Playfair: Everybody's guide to noncompetitive play*. San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact Publishers.

Strategies for Promoting Full Inclusion Within Schools

These books describe the movement known as "full inclusion": reorganizing and restructuring schools to meet the needs of all children, including those with disabilities. Many strategies are suggested for thinking about school reform and classroom organization.

Perske, R. (1988). *Circle of friends: People with disabilities and their friends enrich the lives of one another*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Stainback, W., & Stainback, S. (1990). *Support networks for inclusive schooling: Interdependent integrated education*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes.

Teaching About Differences: Curriculum Guides

These resources include strategies for talking and teaching about individual differences including, but not limited to, disabilities.

Barnes, E., Berrigna, C. & Biklen, D. (1978). *What's the difference: Teaching positive attitudes towards people with disabilities*. Syracuse, NY: Human Policy Press.

Derman-Sparks, L., & the ABC Task Force. (1989). *Anti-bias curriculum: Tools for empowering young children*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Schniedewind, N., & Davidson, E. (1983). *Open minds to equality: A sourcebook of learning activities to promote race, sex, class and age equity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Children's Books About Differences

There are many excellent children's books that model diversity and inclusiveness. In addition to books that directly address disability/difference issues, more general books that address the multiple differences that exist in classrooms and society can be helpful in beginning a discussion with children.

Barkin, C., & James, E. (1975). *Doing things together*. Milwaukee: Raintree Publishers.

Brightman, A. (1976). *Like me*. Boston: Little Brown.

Cameron, P. (1961). *I can't said the ant*. East Rutherford, NJ: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan.

Clifton, L. (1980). *My friend Jacob*. New York: Elsevier/Dutton.

dePaola, T. (1983). *Now one foot, now the other*. New York: Putnam.

Hazen, B. S. (1985). *Why are people different? A book about prejudice*. New York: Golden Books.

Schiff, N., & Becky, S. (1973). *Some things you just can't do by yourself*. Stanford, CA: New Seed Press.

Simon, N. (1975). *All kinds of families*. Niles, IL: Whitman.

Wolf, B. (1974). *Don't feel sorry for Paul*. New York: Harper & Row.

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- Hunt, J. McV. (1961). *Intelligence and Experience*. NY: Ronald Press.
- Johnson, D., & Johnson, R. (1975). *Learning together and alone*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Massachusetts Advocacy Center. (1990). *Locked in/locked out: Tracking and placement practices in Boston public schools*. Boston, MA: author.
- Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping track*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Sapon-Shevin, M. (1990). Student support through cooperative learning. In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Support networks for inclusive schooling: Interdependent integrated education* (pp. 65-79). Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes.
- Stainback, W., & Stainback, S. (Eds.). (1990). *Support networks for inclusive schooling: Interdependent integrated education*. Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes.

Class Differences: Economic Inequality in the Classroom

Ellen Davidson and Nancy Schniedewind

Jimmy is in the 2nd grade and he likes school. He pays attention in class and does well. He has an above-average IQ and is reading slightly above grade level. Bobby is a 2nd-grader, too. Like Jimmy he is attentive in class, which he enjoys. His IQ and reading skills are comparable to Jimmy's. But Bobby is the son of a successful lawyer whose annual salary . . . puts him within the top percentages of income distribution in this country. Jimmy's father, on the other hand, works from time to time as a messenger or a custodial assistant, and earns just above the poverty line. Despite the similarities in ability between the two boys, the difference in circumstances to which they were born makes it 27 times more likely that Bobby will get a job that, by the time he is in his late 40s, will pay him an income in the top tenth of all incomes in this country. Jimmy has only about one chance in eight of earning even a median income. (deLone, 1979, pp. 3-4)

Many Americans, especially those with sufficient income to live comfortably, don't think or talk much about class. The prevailing ideology that all Americans have an equal chance to succeed—and if some don't "make it," it's *their* fault—prevents people from clearly examining economic inequality in the society. Similarly, educators are seldom encouraged to reflect on the ways class bias affects them, their students and schools. We may have gone to a workshop or taken a course on dealing with racism or sexism in education, but how often have we been offered a workshop on class inequality? We can go into a good children's bookstore and request books that deal well with issues of race or gender and have our needs met. But what happens if we ask for books that portray families from a range of socioeconomic class settings? While teachers may point to class background as a source of a student's learning or behavior problem, we are seldom encouraged to understand class difference as a form of discrimination that takes collective efforts to understand, address and change. We hope that the ideas in this chapter will initiate that process.

Class has to do with a person's position in society that is based on money, power and access to resources and opportunities. Class background, then, correlates with other factors related to schooling, such as expectations of the education system, support for various teaching approaches and attitudes toward discipline. "Classism" is the differential treatment of groups of people because of their class background and

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the reinforcement of those differences through values and practices of institutions such as schools. Schools, however, can and should be democratic institutions that provide students an equal chance. This chapter examines how class differences are perpetuated and how we can work to transform them.

WHY ADDRESS "CLASSISM" IN EDUCATION?

There are many complex causes for the problems that arise from the effects of class difference that abound in schools. Stereotypes of, and prejudices about, people from different class backgrounds affect the thinking and behavior of both teachers and students. When class prejudices and stereotypes are enforced by people and institutions in authority and normalized by cultural attitudes and values, power reinforces prejudice, one of the causes of classism. Schools continue to systematize this differential treatment of people because of their class background. In other ways, schools don't differentiate when they ought to—when students' socioeconomic backgrounds mean that they have diverse educational needs.

[S]uccess in institutions—schools, workplaces, and so on—is predicated upon acquisition of the culture of those in power. Children from middle-class homes tend to do better in school than those from non-middle-class homes because the culture of the school is based on the culture of the upper and middle classes—of those in power. The upper and middle classes send their children to school with all the accoutrements of the culture of power; children from other kinds of families operate within perfectly wonderful and viable cultures but not cultures that carry the codes or rules of power. . . . To provide schooling for everyone's children that reflects liberal, middle-class values and aspirations is to ensure the maintenance of the status quo, to ensure that power, the culture of power, remains in the hands of those who already have it. (Delpit, 1988, pp. 283, 285)

Class differences in society affect learning. Children from homes of lower economic status are likely to have fewer opportunities to enhance learning as it is defined in middle-class designed schools. Their parents are less able to give help on homework, provide many books in the home, pay for expensive trips or afford community-based educational and extracurricular opportunities. Children of more privileged class backgrounds are usually enriched by these same opportunities. What is of particular importance is that students themselves usually do not see these inhibitors or stimulants to academic success as contributing to their ability to perform in school. Poorer students typically tend to blame themselves and come to think of themselves as dumb, while privileged students develop a personal confidence and competence unconnected to its source in class privilege.

These perceptions are significantly complicated by race. Charles Willie reports that, while the conclusions stated above seem true for the working-class, Black working-class families understand that their circumstances are partly attributable to racial discrimination (Willie, 1985, pp. 8-9). While these observations do not negate the conclusions we draw here, it is important to keep in mind the complexity of these issues.

The effects of classism on positive social interaction are visible in schools. As they move into the upper-elementary grades, especially into middle schools or junior highs, students may find it harder and harder to cross class lines in social interactions, either in school or in the community. What students have, what neighborhood they

live in, how their family lives, what they wear, what music they enjoy, their vocabulary and who their friends are, all get in the way. Classism thwarts learning, inhibits positive social interaction among students and ultimately reinforces inequality in society.

Americans tend to believe that through schooling people can transcend their class status. While this can be true for some individuals, schools overall serve to sort people along lines of class, race and gender. In fact, they reproduce the class structure by providing different materials, institutional practices and teacher-interaction patterns for students of different class backgrounds (Oakes, 1985). Schooling for working-class students is more likely to train them for routine and manual labor, while that provided to upper- and middle-class students involves creativity and self-management (Anyon, 1981). One result is that economic returns from school are greater for individuals who are advantaged to begin with (Jencks, 1979). This differential treatment affects student self-perception and consciousness as well. When upper- and middle-class students are offered innovative, progressive educational approaches, they come to see themselves as capable of thinking critically and taking leadership. When poor and working-class students receive routinized instruction and authoritarian modes of discipline, they become conformist and accepting of routine in order to get by in school. Thus both groups are prepared for the types of jobs waiting for them in a class-based society. Most educators are discouraged by these patterns, since we hope that our teaching can be a vehicle for class mobility. One way that hope for economic equality for students can be realized is by better understanding and changing classism, and helping our students to do the same.

HEIGHTENING TEACHER AWARENESS ABOUT CLASS

Teachers are typically middle class; their values, part of the hidden curriculum, can affect the self-esteem of lower socioeconomic class students. Discrimination is typically unintentional, but it can be overt. As teachers we haven't been encouraged to look at institutionalized practices that support inequality, particularly class bias. Therefore, when we start examining classism seriously, we may face surprising or unsettling realizations. For example, we may find that unintentionally we have been perpetuating inequality in our classrooms or our lives, often in such subtle ways that we have had little opportunity to develop awareness of this. While not always easy to accept, such learning can be challenging and hopeful, because once aware of a problem we can change it.

Initially, it's important to think about how our own class background affects our views and ability to understand others reared under different circumstances. For example, it might be difficult for teachers from middle-class backgrounds, who grew up never worrying about having enough to eat or a roof over their heads, to understand and teach children who have these day-by-day anxieties. Similarly, many teachers may have difficulty identifying and empathizing with the nagging, overwhelming self-doubt of a working-class student who, while academically able, is terrified by the prospect of college (Lortie, 1975). In any case, awareness of our own class backgrounds must be a conscious lens through which we examine our actions, day-to-day, in school situations. Often it is the more subtle implications that we miss, such as the unintentional but often homogeneous class composition of each of our reading groups or our

differential reactions to students' clothing. We can educate ourselves about the life experience of those from other socioeconomic backgrounds and about classism in society by reading, talking to others and reflecting upon what we see and hear. We can learn to be inclusive in how we work with students, rather than perceiving a particular, usually middle-class, way of doing things as the only right way. (See interviews with teachers and suggested readings at end of chapter.)

In thinking about how to make changes, we might ask ourselves some questions. How does class bias affect learning in our schools? Do teachers have different academic expectations of children based on their class backgrounds? Do they assume that some will eventually go to college and others won't? Such expectations are subtly communicated to students and affect students' own expectations. Ray Rist in his classic study explored primary teachers' assumptions of their students' economic status and how these affected time spent with, and expectations of, various groups of children. Through anecdotal reports passed on to subsequent teachers, the subtle tracking that began in kindergarten continued in subsequent years (Rist, 1970). Expectations matter!

It is useful to examine what teachers ask students to talk or write about. Do children bring in things that cost money for sharing? If so, in what price range? Sharing can be structured in creative ways that don't depend on money (e.g., sharing things children have made, stories or music from their own cultures, a skill they've learned from a grandparent or experiences they've had). Do we use examples of major consumer products in our lessons, reinforcing the idea that "normal" people have the desire and the means to buy them? Do teachers, in assigning students to write about summer vacations, assume that all students travel with their families or visit relatives or friends away from home? How do they structure assignments to be inclusive and affirming to students without the privileges of such family outings?

Does the class raise the money needed for field trips and school outings so *everyone* can afford to go? What if the school is in a neighborhood where few people can afford to buy enough school-sold products to raise sufficient money? Do we call upon local businesses to sponsor trips? Do we work with parents or older students to write mini-grants for these?

What messages about "class" are given in the textbooks and children's literature teachers use? Do texts focus on "famous people," usually those of privileged class status, or are the accomplishments and hard work of poor and working-class people given equal focus and respect?¹ Look at the messages in storybooks. Do people who work hard always succeed? What message does the reward of diligence give the child whose parents are struggling hard and not making it? Do texts and stories implicitly blame poor people for their situation, or do they help children understand how some people have unequal opportunities because of their class background?

How do teachers deal with the class bias that emerges in social interaction among students? To tolerate name-calling or "put-downs" based on class bias (e.g., "What do you do, shop at Goodwill?") is to condone them. A strongly enforced norm of "no put-downs" is always in order. How do teachers "know" the class backgrounds of their students? Do teachers sometimes make assumptions based on superficial facts that may be misleading?

¹Good sources for teachers of contributions of poor and working-class people to U.S. history and culture are found in Zinn (1980), Baxandell et al. (1976) and Lerner (1973).

There are many other questions we can ask ourselves about classism in classrooms. Do teachers intentionally form groups of students from different class backgrounds, who might ordinarily distance themselves from each other, so they may get to know each other? Using cooperatively structured/heterogeneous learning groups, teaching students about class bias so that old stereotypes aren't reinforced, teaching students to respect and affirm cultural diversity, creating an inclusive rather than exclusive atmosphere and compensating for differences in what children can get from their homes, all can promote both greater academic learning and deeper understanding of others.

As we begin to answer some of these questions, we find many ways we can begin to deal with classism. One way is constantly to reflect upon our own assumptions and biases and adjust our day-by-day teaching to meet the needs of a diverse socioeconomic population. Another is to educate students about diversity and provide opportunities to create changes in their classrooms and schools. Having raised some important issues on bias, we will offer suggestions of diverse ways to actively address classism. And as we reflect on and analyze that which occurs in our own lives and classrooms, we may be led to pursue institutional changes as well. For example, how do competitive norms and practices in schools and society contribute to the "meritocratic" values and expectations that lead to class bias? Encouraging the well-thought-out use of cooperatively structured learning in classrooms can help students develop alternative values, as well as improve academic learning for all (Schniedewind & Davidson, 1987).

HELPING STUDENTS UNDERSTAND AND CHANGE CLASSISM

Teachers can intentionally teach students about economic inequality and how to work to change attitudes and practices that reinforce classism. In their own classrooms and schools, students can examine how class bias may be perpetuated and work cooperatively to remove classroom-based barriers to equal learning, respect and opportunities for all. Students must become empowered to make changes within their control and develop a broader perspective on wider-reaching societal changes they will be able to help facilitate as they grow older. One sequential process for teaching students to understand and change many forms of inequality is laid out in *Open Minds to Equality: Learning Activities To Promote Race, Sex, Class and Age Equity*. Here we describe those steps in regard to educating children about classism. Details on most of these examples are available in *Open Minds to Equality* (Schniedewind & Davidson, 1983).²

Initially, it is crucial to build a supportive atmosphere in the classroom, an atmosphere in which all children feel accepted and valued, both by the teacher and other students. In the beginning of the year, we should provide students activities for getting to know each other and developing trust. Before we initiate such activities, we must examine them for possible class bias and make needed modifications in lesson designs. Students need to learn skills for working together. Some students may come

² Some examples of lessons briefly described in this section of the chapter are: "If Only We Had More Money"; "Lizzie Gets Old Clothes"; "Create a Mobile"; "Ice Cream Sundaes, Apples or Raisins"; "Our Textbooks: Are They Fair?"; "Find That Classic Bias"; "Are They Advertising More Than the Product?"; "2192 Hours a Year"; "Message in the Package"; "Yes, You Can Be a Doctor"; "From Fear to Power"; "Finding Better Books"; "Change That Classic Bias"; "TV Turnabouts"; "Sharing Results."

to our classrooms with well-developed skills in cooperation, others may need a great deal of guidance. These skills must be taught, just as reading or math skills are taught. When students feel secure, accepted and respected by their teachers and peers, and feel empowered to share their ideas and work cooperatively with others, they can deal most effectively with an issue like economic inequality that brings out many strong emotions.

It is also important to create a norm that affirms discussing class issues. The communications media, contemporary societal values and institutions bombard Americans with the message that if you're poor, it's your own fault and those who prosper have only themselves to thank. Students of a low socioeconomic status may have absorbed this message. Similarly, more privileged students may have acquired a self-righteous superiority. Students may not be aware of these feelings. If they are aware, they may not be comfortable talking openly about them, especially in a mixed-class group. Therefore, we should set a tone in the classroom for discussing these issues. You can adjust a statement like the following to your own classroom situation.

□ All of us come from different family situations. For some, money isn't a problem but for others, having enough money for basic necessities is always a worry. Many of us fall in between. Some of us come from homes where our parents have had a great deal of education, others from homes where higher education has not been possible. Some of us come from families who have easily been able to get what we want and make things happen the way we want. Other members of our class come from families who haven't had this access and don't have this kind of power. We will work hard to create a classroom where we understand, respect and value each other, whatever our family situation, and learn what we can do to help create a society where everybody has enough of what they need to live.

As students become more comfortable talking about class issues, it's our responsibility, too, to maintain guidelines for interpersonal communication and an ethic of care that protects their vulnerability. It is important for teachers to keep from making assumptions about income, access, empowerment or values. We can, instead, teach students to gather data and then work from them. Such activities can make excellent interdisciplinary lessons in mathematics and social studies. There are simple ways to do this. For example, students can be asked to anonymously complete sentence stems about what they usually receive for birthday presents, what they do in their free time or how they receive medical care. Students can do drawings about what they hope to be when they grow up or what they would change about society if they could. Aggregate responses can be made into charts, bar graphs, pictographs or circle graphs and analyzed mathematically and socially.

Students need accurate information about people of diverse class backgrounds and opportunities to "get into others' shoes" and see the world from a different perspective. Role-playing a hypothetical situation where a student is going to be left out of an event because of lack of money can be, with good follow-up discussion, effective for developing empathy with a student in that situation. Students can then discuss similar times in their lives when they, or other children, faced problems because of little money. The class can go further to examine ways the economically disadvantaged student and the more economically advantaged students dealt with the situation in the role play, and brainstorm strategies they could try in real life to deal more effectively with such a situation.

New words to define, name and discuss economic inequality and its consequences are important to students' growing awareness. They can learn about stereotypes based on class bias. For example, they can work together to finish an open-ended story about the reaction of classmates to a student whose family might be evicted from their apartment. They identify the stereotypes and prejudices and write a different ending. After sharing endings, students discuss why some people stereotype others and what everyone loses by doing so. They share examples of class-based stereotypes that may have affected their lives and ways to deal with them.

Children can learn to understand and name institutional discrimination when we explain that the prejudices and stereotypes as practiced by those with more power than others or by institutions—like schools, families, the government, businesses—have a powerful effect upon those less privileged. The practice of treating people differently because of the amount of money they have is a facet of classism. Concrete examples help. A student may read a letter from a working-class high school student to her friend, expressing her disappointment at not being able to go on to college to become a doctor because of the need to work to help support her younger siblings. After talking about that student's feelings, the class can discuss personal examples of having had to give up something very important in their lives because of money. Students discuss questions such as: Why did she have to give up hope of becoming a doctor because of lack of money? How should educational programs select students to become doctors? How should they support them? How do *all* Americans lose by the current situation of difficult access to a medical education? Through such discussions, students should have a new understanding of discrimination based on economic inequality.

Next, students are ready to examine how classism denies particular groups of people resources while supporting the success and achievement of others. They can learn to recognize the process of "blaming the victim." Those denied equal resources through institutional discrimination themselves are often blamed for their lack of success. Students can examine how causes of inequality may be a *system* of institutional discrimination that distributes resources, opportunities and power unequally, rather than the deficiencies of *individuals*. Through experiential activities, students can feel what it's like to be expected to achieve without equal resources and opportunities. For example, the class may be divided into five groups, each group expected to make a mobile related to a topic being studied. Groups are given *unequal* resources for the project, but evaluated by a *common* standard, then afterward asked to share how they felt. They discuss ways people are expected to do equally well without having the same resources, power and money.

Students may then come to see how the privilege of groups of higher economic status is directly connected to the lack of privilege of those of lower socioeconomic status. They can also learn the choices privileged individuals and groups have in fostering change. For example, in a simulated situation, two students representing the most privileged in the United States are served ice-cream sundaes; most students are given an apple each, representing middle-class America; and 25 percent get only a raisin each, representing the poorest. Students are then allowed to eat. The situation can be played out in a number of ways. A long discussion usually follows. Students first focus on how they felt and how they thought others felt. They discuss the choices they made and the choices they had but didn't act upon. Was food

shared? What questions did they ask themselves? What did they ask each other? This may be followed by a discussion of how this simulated situation reflects the current economic and food-distribution situation in the nation, how those with plenty of food are connected to the hungry and what can be done to change the structure of economic inequality.

Once students understand class discrimination better, they can examine their own environment—classroom, school, home, communications media and community—for class bias. Occasionally remind students that the intent is not to criticize but to discover examples of inequality and that a great deal of discrimination is unintentional; only when people become aware of abusive attitudes can they change them.

Students can examine their textbooks in any subject area for classism. They can: 1) count how many people are middle or upper class compared to those of lower socioeconomic classes; 2) determine whether there are differences in the way people from different classes are presented. Similarly, using a worksheet, students can learn to pinpoint examples of class bias in books they read and consider how books influence their views about class. When students work in groups and compare findings, they can discuss what classes of people most stories are written about, try to determine the author's opinion of the characters and explore how students of different backgrounds might feel in reading about characters whose lives are unlike their own.

Similarly, students can examine the communications media and their own community. Groups can be assigned to watch newspaper and TV commercials to determine representation of people from different classes and what products they advertise. By analyzing TV entertainment, they can determine the class and qualities of those portrayed and compare TV families' economic situations to the real conditions of people.

Students can analyze grocery store packaged products to determine how stereotypes of middle-class people are perpetuated as compared to those of lower-class people. What messages do these convey about superiority and inferiority? What impact do stereotypes have on real people?

Students can work toward fostering change, learning about people who struggle for economic equality, such as exploited workers who organized a strike in their factory. They can discover examples of more egalitarian living, working and learning situations by examining case studies where economic needs and opportunities for citizens are more equitable, such as free access to medical education in Norway.

Students *can* act to make a difference. By engaging in collaborative efforts to make change, they develop a sense of personal and collective power. Providing them practice in assertion and standing up for their beliefs helps students build the skills and confidence to foster change. Students can then develop projects to educate others about class bias. For example, by using their textbook analysis, students can write to publishers about the class bias they discovered and request change and/or make an "Equality Book List" of texts and books that aren't class biased and share that with other classes. We can read a story to students and discuss it to challenge class bias—like *New Life, New Room* (see Books for Students). Students can write their own stories that counteract stereotypes of low-income people. Suggest creating a problem in their story that a family might face because of unequal opportunities and resources and coming up with a creative solution to the problem that might include people mak-

ing changes in conditions that cause the problem. After peer review, students can present their skits, filmstrips or story boards for presentation to other classes and/or for display on bulletin boards. They can create books for their school library that can be borrowed by students in other classes.

Students can create dramatizations of TV ads to make them class fair and write letters to product-packaging companies with descriptions of preferable class-fair examples. Students can display their visual presentations on class bias in ways that will engage others in thinking and questioning. Change can be contagious.

NORMS AND PRACTICES THAT AFFIRM CLASS DIFFERENCES

Together with a sequential instructional program on class inequality, teachers can examine classroom and school practices that are class biased and work to create alternatives that validate children of all class backgrounds. By examining resources that might not get distributed to children equally, teachers can help students develop ways to make their classroom more equitable. Having students read for a certain number of minutes a day at home with their parents and rewarding them with prizes may seem inconsequential, but may be helpful. How can we create a classroom where reading books and having access to books are possible for everyone, while creating one that affirms the oral tradition is also important? If we want reading books to be one important piece of literacy, what happens to students—often those of lower socioeconomic status—whose parents either don't have the time, ability or energy to read to them? Having students of mixed-ability levels read to each other in school encourages many students to be eager readers. Having them tell or read stories to each other in school enriches their sense of the breadth of literacy and affirms alternative lifestyles and cultures.

Where family economic situations make it difficult for some children to order from book clubs, the class may devise creative ways for raising money to enable all children to have a reasonable number of books. A car wash, bake sale or raffle could be an effective means of raising book money. Local businesses can donate items for raffles. Students can have fun with such a project while making book purchasing more equitable.

Better-educated parents find it easier to help their children with schoolwork. How can teachers handle this discrepancy in a way that is helpful and affirming to all children and all families? Can we set up tutoring systems for parents with particular skills to help more than their own children? Can we organize cooperative groups where children from different class backgrounds work together and get help from any or all of their parents? Shall we restructure some school assignments so that parents with skills not traditionally recognized by schools may have those skills affirmed and be able to help?

Academic tracking, most pronounced in secondary school, has often made its way into elementary schools. While educators used to think it served students and teachers well, tracking has recently been shown to be counterproductive to student learning at *all* ability levels (Oakes, 1985). And, perhaps most important, tracking reinforces classism. Educators who raise critical questions about homogeneous grouping and tracking and work to institute educationally sound alternatives, such as cooperative

learning, make important contributions to changing classism in schools. For this to be effective, administrators, teachers, students and parents need to learn about benefits for all students in heterogeneous grouping, increases in academic achievement for students at all levels and improvements in social skills. Schools need parental and community support for these changes to last and truly serve all students.

TEACHERS TALK ABOUT CLASS

My immediate response when someone says class is to get my back against the nearest wall and come out with this, "What do you *mean* by class?" Because I think it is a complicated issue. . . . Class gets boiled down to issues of parents' income, issues of parents' education, but it's more complex. . . . I prefer talking about "access." I ask myself, "Is this a family that has had access? Access to schooling choices? Making health care choices? Advocating politically? Can this family come into a school situation and have impact on the school? Can they get what they need and want?" So it's not as simple as income or parent education. (Davidson, E. [1990, July], interview with Judy Richards, Graham-Parks School, Cambridge, MA)

Dealing with day-to-day class issues in the classroom is complex. Judy Richards and Alma Wright, two experienced teachers, have actively addressed class issues in their classroom structures, atmospheres and daily teaching. Their clear beliefs about how best to work with a diverse socioeconomic population can help us better understand how individual teachers can handle these issues. In addition to an overall framework, each has developed many specific strategies. By comparing and contrasting their views, we can get a fuller picture.

Judy Richards teaches 3rd and 4th grades in an alternative public school in Cambridge, MA. She is White and comes from a working-class background. Her students are approximately one-third Black Haitian, generally lower class; one-third White middle class; and one-third American Black or White working class.

Alma Wright has taught 1st and 2nd grades for 20 years at the Trotter School in Boston. Trotter, like other schools in the city, is 60 percent Black, 20 percent Hispanic and 20 percent White. The Black and Hispanic students are working class or poor; students of color from professional homes in Boston go to private schools or participate in a program that buses them to White suburban schools. Alma reports that most of the Black and Hispanic children live in housing projects and come from single-parent families. The White children are primarily from middle-class homes with professional parents. Alma says that White children from working-class homes mostly attend parochial schools. Alma herself is Black and from a low-income background.

Judy and Alma point out that, in order to create a classroom that is as free from classism as possible and affirms all children without regard to their class backgrounds, we must have an awareness of class issues and look consistently at our actions in terms of their impact on children of varied classes. Awareness includes our expectations, both covert and overt. We must be careful not to make assumptions about lifestyles and beliefs.

There are many ways to deal assertively with the issue of socioeconomic class in the classroom. One way, as we explored earlier in this chapter, is to do organized activities on classism and confront the issue of class and its impact on students. We must then take this awareness and modify the ways we structure our classes, design our academic work and react to students' behaviors.

Values

Judy sees schools as places where middle-class values and culture are constantly reaffirmed. Middle-class families support and perpetuate school values and thus children from these homes receive affirmation from their teachers because their home values are similar to school values. In contrast, teachers often judge and condemn poor and working-class families for their values and choices that are different from those at school.

For example, Judy asks, "How often do we judge parental behavior as a righteous choice or not righteous choice? How is that tied into our behaviors with our students? What message do students get from our judgments?" Judgments about the class implications in language—grammar, vocabulary and syntax—come up repeatedly in the classroom. Judy recounts an incident where she heard a student say to a teacher, "Miss, I ain't got no pencil." Instead of providing or not providing the pencil, the teacher used this as an opportunity to ridicule the student's language and emphasize that home language was not for school. By defining language as "only-for-home language," Judy believes school becomes a place where the student doesn't feel accepted or respected. It doesn't become a place where the student feels he/she can succeed.

Inclusive Rather Than Selective

Judy says that "not condemning" a particular lifestyle is not enough; teachers must actively *affirm* a diversity of lifestyles. Judy's classroom is inclusive rather than selective. She invites parents to participate actively in her classroom. There are varied opportunities that appeal to different parents. A core group of parents regularly volunteers to help with the Friday morning problem-solving sessions. These are entirely White, middle-class parents. Judy attributes this homogeneity primarily to the fact that these parents have professional jobs allowing them flexibility in scheduling. She also recognizes that her Friday mornings are high powered in a way that is attractive to well-educated, middle-class parents with confidence in their backgrounds and abilities in this area, but possibly intimidating to working-class parents who haven't had access to that education. She finds, however, that other parents from varied classes come to read to children, have children read aloud to them and participate in "open elective" time where a range of activities is offered.

I remember a woman who could tell wonderful stories to kids. If reading and writing were your criteria for literacy, she was illiterate. She had grown up in the Fernald School (a school for developmentally disabled persons). But she would tell kids about animals. When her daughter learned to read, she really became interested in learning to read and went to the adult learning center.

When Judy did a theme on the local area, all the parents could contribute. Some came from families who had lived in the area for generations and could talk about that. Others were recent immigrants and could talk about why they moved to the area. All these contributions were valuable to the children's understanding. Keeping in mind that some parents have jobs that do not allow any free time during the day to come to school, Judy is careful to schedule parent conferences at times convenient to different families.

Clothing

Another class issue that comes up repeatedly for both Judy and Alma is clothing, an issue from which two important points emerge. First is the need to approach students without fixed preconceptions and assumptions. The other is to refrain from making value judgments; we should observe and try to understand.

Judy talks of middle-class teachers who "sit back from a haughty place and say, 'You ought not to spend your money on Nike sneakers when money is scarce and you should spread it out. You could get a whole outfit for this price.'" She also points out how teachers relate differently to poor students who are particularly well dressed versus those who are poorly dressed.

Alma also comments on clothing:

I find that some of my children who are coming from welfare homes, they're dressing, they're bringing in toys, they're sharing things, they're talking about places they go as well as kids who are coming from middle-class homes. Sometimes they have a lot more because a lot of the young, single-family welfare homes put more emphasis on dressing and making sure they're keeping up with, say, Ninja turtles more so than, say, a middle-class home.

Alma reports that this has been the case for the 20 years she has been at her school. Judy also reports that the Black working-class and poor children tend to be consistently well dressed. She reports middle-class parents are more able to say, "Hey, they're gonna get dirty!" when their kids go off to school. A middle-class teacher can have the luxury of saying "No big deal" about a child getting paint on his/her clothes but this can be, in fact, a big deal to a family that has struggled hard to buy those clothes. She says that she finds families will not send children back to school in those clothes if they can't get the paint stains out.

The parent wouldn't say you got it in school, you're going back with it to school. That's one of the places where I think we set kids up. We set kids up who are not middle-class kids. We say, "It's okay if you get paint on yourself." Well, it's not always okay and that's a place where teachers have to be mindful and not to devalue clothes. The parents work very hard to dress their children and have them ready for school and we can't turn around and say it's okay. So you make sure you either have classroom painting clothes for *everyone* or you have smocks from wrist to knee for everyone. It's important not to sit back and make casual calls.

Recognizing that while quality of clothing may not be as simplistically class based as we may have thought, there are still economic issues that involve what children have. In addition to many students bringing in their own snack, both Alma and Judy serve "common snack" in their classrooms. They provide an appealing, reasonably nutritious snack (but not so nutritious that it stands out as being different from what the children bring), which is available to everyone and they themselves eat. In both classrooms, this is accepted and enjoyed by the children and brings about a kind of equality in that portion of the children's days.

The Standard Curriculum

Reading plays a crucial role in the interconnection between social class and school achievement. Judy believes that having books at home is directly related to class, not

race. She talks of both White kids and Black kids from homes where parents are not readers. Judy asks, "How do you encourage more reading at homes that don't do it, without implying that not doing so means there is something wrong with the family?"

For Judy this is bound up in her belief that it is absolutely crucial to actively affirm the culture of her students. Many of her Haitian students come from homes where families don't read but where there is a rich storytelling tradition. This is also true for some of the White families in her school where parents are only beginning readers themselves but come from regions within the United States where storytelling is an integral part of the culture. She says that it is important to place a great deal of value on storytelling, acknowledging that not everybody reads stories to their children, that lots of folks pass on stories orally instead. "You give both validity and honor to another kind of literacy. You broaden your sense of literacy to include the verbal piece as well as the written piece."

Alma provides her own classroom lending library. She says all her students have books at home but not necessarily the books middle-class teachers expect. The parents of children in her class buy books at the grocery store; they buy coloring books. Alma gives every child a gift of two books each year. In addition, the school has a "home reading program" where, if the children read each night for eight weeks, they get a free book to keep. She says there are federal programs that will fund these if the schools apply.

Judy talks about her Friday morning problem-solving groups. Children in heterogeneous groups of five meet weekly to solve nonroutine mathematics problems. One that she has given for a number of years is this: "You go to the stream with a three-liter container and a seven-liter container. You want to come back with exactly five liters of water. How do you do it?" Judy "repackaged" this mathematics problem in the form of a Haitian folk tale. The children are familiar with this tale of a brother, a sister and a fish where the girl has made friends with the fish and thus gets clearer water than her brother. The story deals with friendship and possession and grieving. In Judy's version of the mathematics problem, she uses the names of the girl, boy and mother and uses their personalities in explaining what is wanted. When Judy did it this way, the middle-class children were no longer the dominant forces in the problem-solving groups. The Haitian children actively participated in their groups.

By changing the cultural and class bias of the problem, Judy has also shifted the apparent academic abilities of her students. Concerning the implications of this shift, Judy has advice for other teachers:

Certainly be very careful that, when you design novel groups or math groups or whatever, you look at the design of them and you say, "Does this group have any diversity in it?" How can you rearrange it so it's not skill groups? Can you have a reading group about horses and take anyone interested in horses? . . . You can't do skill groups if they don't have diversity by class and race. You can't say, "It's fate," or "It's beyond my control because this is the situation." You have to say, "Well, it's going to make it harder, now what else can I do?"

School Success

Both Alma and Judy are clear that achievement in their classes, as defined by standardized tests and other commonly used methods, correlates directly with the

socioeconomic class of the students. Alma sees that what appears to be standardized scores in Boston based on race are actually based on class and are due to the demographics of Boston public schools where middle-class and White are highly correlated.

Reflecting on the Boston public schools today, Alma believes teachers often expect less of children from low-income homes. She says that by expecting "utopia" for her children, she makes a major contribution toward their success.

Alma reflects on her own background in order to explain her understanding of class issues and her teaching style relative to class. Alma grew up in a small town of 1,500 people with a Black population of 500 in rural Florida. Her mother completed 6th grade and her father completed 8th. Alma credits her own educational and professional success and that of her classmates to the support they received growing up. Her teachers were all Black professionals at an all-Black school. They were also all active church members. The students from her small elementary school had to be bused 30 miles to the Black high school. Community expectations were that these students would graduate from college. Although all these children came from homes with parents who had not attended high school, their children did, indeed, all graduate from college and many from graduate school. The community provided ongoing support by giving students needed money, clothing, equipment and sending care packages and checking on grades. "You had a feeling that if you didn't succeed you failed the whole town. We knew that the teachers liked us and wanted us to succeed." Alma sees role models and supportive teachers, parents and community members as central to students' academic achievement.

Alma talks of the need to give special attention to children who are experiencing trauma in their lives. She says that by dealing directly with these issues in school, providing an opportunity for students to talk and giving a great deal of support, she can help children improve their school performances significantly as well as their emotional well-being at home and school. Alma feels teachers are responsible for giving out-of-class special attention to students who need it. She also insists on parental contact. This includes phoning and visiting parents at home, showing support for them with their own problems—even if these are not connected with parenting—and being understanding. Parental contact includes being firm and clear about parental responsibilities and providing help to parents to carry those out.

Alma feels that her school does well in terms of making all children feel welcome and competent. Part of this is beginning the school year with an emphasis on self-esteem for all children. She says that her 1st- and 2nd-grade children's aspirations are not based on class or race. When she does an activity about "What I Want To Be When I Grow Up," she says that their goals do not at all correlate with class or race. She also makes a point of presenting children with a range of role models, varied by race and class but with an emphasis away from just White, middle-class role models. Even though most of her Black children come from low-income families, she is able to find some parents and friends of their parents who model a range of alternatives. For example, she brings into her classroom guest speakers in a variety of occupations and from a variety of backgrounds.

Judy talks of values of competition versus cooperation as having major impact. She says the Haitian kids talk of "We" not "I." In classroom discussions in Judy's room, the custom is that after a child has finished talking he/she calls on another child rather than having the discussion refocus on Judy. This power sharing has a great im-

pact on the flow of these talks. In the computer lab, the middle-class students tend to talk only with each other to compare what lessons they are on. The Haitian kids, on the other hand, are concerned with cooperating and helping each other, even if it means not "getting as far."

We need really to look again at what we value in school. You know we give lip service to co-operation but when kids do it naturally it's counterproductive to what we want when we want them to get this much done in this much time.

Judy believes that this cultural bias toward cooperation can be used to break the "who's at the top" dynamic. This involves serious restructuring of our classrooms, and it means important growth in social and academic learning for all children.

You set up situations where there's different leadership. . . . You look at the leadership of kids who are not middle class and say to yourself, "Let's incorporate that leadership style in our classroom as well." So "who's on top" is not always the same.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

As we become more aware of and concerned about class issues in our classrooms, we must modify our teaching in many ways. We can do activities to increase students' awareness of class issues, create new methods for sharing resources within our classroom community, structure reading groups differently, create more inclusive word problems in mathematics and work toward parent involvement that respects all parents' skills and needs. In any case, we must reflect on the impact of our actions and classroom culture on children of different socioeconomic classes. In this context, it is important to be conscious of classism in society and how that affects our efforts. For example, since schools are typically funded through property taxes, disproportionately greater resources are available to schools in wealthier communities. While we are working to help students understand and change class bias, they can be simultaneously getting counter-messages condoning classism from other sources, such as TV, the neighborhood or family. For many, all this may well lead to further questions and concerns. What are some ways that classism cannot be changed merely by what we do at school? What is our role in working on those larger societal changes? What are we doing in our personal lives that reinforces classism? What are we doing to actively work toward change?

Continued on page 68

RESOURCES

Books for Students

(P) - Primary; (U) - Upper Elementary; (M) - Middle School

- Bogard, L. (1986). *Poor Gertie*. New York: Delacorte. (U)
 Byars, B. (1977). *Pinballs*. New York: Harper & Row. (U)
 Cleaver, V. & B. (1969). *Where the lillies bloom*. New York: New American Library. (U) (plus others by this author)
 Delton, J. (1980). *My mother lost her job today*. Chicago: Whitman. (P)
 Estes, E. (1944). *The hundred dresses*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. (U)
 Evans, M. (1973). *JD*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday. (U)
 Franchere, R. (1970). *Cesar Chavez*. New York: Crowell. (U)
 Freeman, D. (1968). *Corduroy*. New York: Viking. (P)
 Getz, A. (1979). *Tar beach*. New York: Dial. (P)
 Greenfield, E. (1980). *Grandmama's joy*. New York: Philomel. (P)
 Guthrie, D. (1988). *A rose for Abby*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. (P)
 Guy, R. (1973). *The friends*. New York: Bantam Skylark. (M)
 Hamilton, V. (1986). *The planet of Junior Brown*. New York: Macmillan. (M)
 Hazen, B. S. (1979). *Tight times*. New York: Puffin, Penguin. (P)
 Hazen, B. S. (1986). *Why can't you stay home with me? A book about working mothers*. New York: Golden. (P)
 Hendershot, J. (1987). *In coal country*. New York: Knopf. (P & U)
 Hunter, K. (1968). *Soul brothers and Sister Lou*. New York: Scribner. (M)
 Jordan, J. (1972). *Fannie Lou Hamer*. New York: Crowell. (U)
 Jordan, J. (1975). *New life: New room*. New York: Crowell. (P)
 Keats, E. J. (1969). *Goggles*. New York: Collier Books. (P) (plus many others by this author)
 Lyon, G. E. (1988). *Borrowed children*. New York: Bantam Starfire. (U)
 Mann, P. (1966). *The street of the flower boxes*. New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan. (U)
 Mathis, S. B. (1971). *Sidewalk story*. New York: Viking. (U)
 Mathis, S. B. (1974). *Listen for the fig tree*. New York: Puffin. (U & M)
 Mazer, N. F. (1981). *Mrs. Fish, ape and me, the dump queen*. New York: Avon. (U)
 Miklowitz, G. (1985). *The war between the classes*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell. (M)
 Mohr, N. (1979). *Felita*. New York: Bantam Skylark. (U)
 Mohr, N. (1986). *El Bronx remembered*. Houston: Arte Publico Press. (M)
 Myers, W. D. (1979). *The young landlords*. New York: Puffin Books. (M)
 Nolan, M. S. (1978). *My daddy don't go to work*. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books. (P)
 Patterson, K. (1977). *Bridge to Terabithia*. New York: Avon Camelot. (U & M)
 Patterson, K. (1978). *The great Gilly Hopkins*. New York: Harper & Row. (U & M)
 Rosenberg, J. (1973). *Being poor*. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books. (all)
 Rylant, C. (1985). *When I was young in the mountains*. New York: Dutton. (P)
 Sachs, M. (1971). *The bear's house*. New York: Avon Camelot. (U)
 Sachs, M. (1987). *Fran Ellen's house*. New York: Avon Camelot. (U)
 Stanek, M. (1985). *All alone after school*. Chicago: Whitman. (P)
 Steptoe, J. (1986). *Stevie*. New York: Harper & Row. (P)
 Taylor, M. (1976). *Roll of thunder, hear my cry*. New York: Bantam. (U)
 Taylor, M. (1981). *Let the circle be unbroken*. New York: Bantam. (M)
 Thomas, I. (1979). *Hi, Mrs. Mallory!*. New York: Harper & Row. (P)
 Voight, C. (1981). *Homecoming*. New York: Fawcett Jr. (M)

- Walter, M. P. (1989). *Have a happy . . .* New York: Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard. (U)
 Williams, V. B. (1982). *A chair for my mother*. New York: Mulberry. (P)
 Williams, V. B. (1983). *Something special for me*. New York: Greenwillow. (P)

Resources for Teachers

- Banks, J. A. & Banks, C. A. (1989). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
 Coalition for Basic Human Needs. (1990, March). *Up and out of poverty campaign*. 54 Essex St., Cambridge, MA 02139 (updated yearly)
 Coles, R. (1973). *Children of crisis (vol 1): A study of courage and fear*. New York: Atlantic. (Plus others in this five-volume series.)
 Council on Interracial Books for Children. (1975). *Human and anti-human values in children's books*. NY: author.
 Dixon, B. (1977). *Catching them young: Sex, race and class in children's fiction*. London: Pluto Press.
 Frazier, T. (1974). *The underside of American history*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
 Lukas, J. A. (1986). *Common ground*. New York: Vintage.
 Matthews, J. (1988). *Escalante: The best teacher in America*. New York: Holt & Co.
 Parenti, M. (1988). *Democracy for the Jew*. New York: St. Martin's.
 Rubin, L. B. (1976). *Worlds of pain: Life in the working-class family*. New York: Basic.
 Ryan, W. (1983). *Blaming the victim*. New York: Vintage.
 Sennett, R. & Cobb, J. (1972). *The hidden injuries of class*. New York: Vintage.
 Sidel, R. (1986). *Women and children last*. New York: Viking.
 Smedley, A. (1973). *Daughter of the earth*. Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press.

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 Baxandell, R., Gordon, L., & Reverby, S. (1976). *America's working women*. New York: Vintage.
 deLone, R., & the Carnegie Council on Children. (1979). *Small futures: Children, inequality and the limits of liberal reform*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
 Delpit, L. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children." *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(3), 280-298.
 Jencks, C. (1979). *Who gets ahead?* New York: Basic Books.
 Lerner, G. (1973). *The black woman in white America: A documentary history*. New York: Vintage.
 Lortie, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Press.
 Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
 Rist, R. (1970). Student social class and teacher expectations: The self-fulfilling prophecy in ghetto education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 40(3), 411-450.
 Schniedewind, N., & Davidson, E. (1983). *Open minds to equality: Learning activities to promote race, sex, class and age equity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. (Can be ordered from Circle Books, 30 Walnut St., Somerville, MA 02143.)
 Schniedewind, N., & Davidson, E. (1987). *Cooperative learning, cooperative lives*. Dubuque, IA: W.C. Brown.
 Willie, C. V. (1985). *Black and white families: A study in complementarity*. Bayside, NY: General Hall.
 Zinn, H. (1980). *A people's history of the United States*. New York: Harper & Row.



Language Diversity in the Classroom

Deborah A. Byrnes and Deana Cortez

The number of school-age students in the United States, ages 5 to 14, with limited-English proficiency is projected to be around 5.1 million by the year 2000 (Soto, 1991). These children, many of them immigrants, will represent linguistic and cultural groups as diverse as Haitians, Afghanistans, Laotians and Tongans. Already, in the southwest alone there are more than 50 culturally and linguistically different groups (Cheng, 1987). Unfortunately, most teachers have little experience or training to work with limited or nonEnglish-speaking children and, consequently, it is estimated that over two-thirds of these children are not receiving appropriate instruction (Soto, 1991; Waggoner & O'Malley, 1985). In addition, the English as an Official Language movement indicates there are strong negative feelings among mainstream Americans about the growing number of linguistic minorities.

With more and more limited or nonEnglish-speaking children entering classrooms, their teachers must address language as well as cultural diversity within the classroom. They must examine their own attitudes and attitudes of their students toward speakers of other languages. When a teacher and student can communicate through a common language, there is a sense that they can share their cultures and learn from one another. When the child does not speak English and the teacher does not speak the child's language, both culture and language limit communication. Teachers are frustrated because they have no way of understanding a child's culture and what the child knows, feels or needs in the way of instruction. Frustration can turn to anger as teachers realize they are accountable for teaching this child with neither the training nor resources for doing so.

This chapter examines issues related to language differences confronting the regular classroom teacher who has limited or nonEnglish-proficient children in class for some part of the day. First to be reviewed are several important background points classroom teachers need to be aware of in order to be more sensitive to needs and experiences of linguistic minorities. Specific suggestions for teaching limited-English-proficient (LEP) students are then made, followed by discussion of how teachers can help English-only students to be sensitive to language differences. The chapter concludes with a short case study of one classroom teacher's work with several LEP students, including suggested resources and references for classroom teachers.

UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Before discussing specific strategies for working with linguistic minorities, a number of important points and misconceptions regarding linguistic differences and second-language learning need to be addressed. Following are some basic concepts and issues relevant to language diversity.

Language and Culture Are Inseparable

There is an intimate relationship between language and culture. Through socialization into our culture, we acquire language. Language, in turn, shapes perception of the physical world around us, the social world in which we live and the spiritual (or metaphysical) world that gives meaning to our lives (see Farb, 1975, for a discussion on the "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis"; that is, the notion that language shapes our view of reality). To use the well-known example, Eskimos have a functional need to describe different kinds of snow. They have separate words for falling snow, slushy snow and snow suitable for cutting into blocks. In many Asian languages, for example, words or word markers indicate the social status of the speaker and the person being addressed. These words denote a person's relative position in the social order and the rights (e.g., commanding respect and reverence) and obligations (e.g., showing deference) he/she has compared to others.

Some languages, like English and Hopi, come from radically different cultures. Imbedded in the languages are two totally different perceptions of reality (Hall, 1973). The Hopi language, for example, has no nouns and no verb tenses. If one wanted to refer to a table, the rough translation into English would be "tabling"—the table has always existed in a spiritual sense; it exists now; it will exist forever. The metaphysical or spiritual view implied by the Hopi language is one in which time is not linear—a view that is difficult, if not impossible, for English speakers to grasp. Language, then, serves "both as a conveyor of culture and as an extension and expression of culture" (Newmark & Asante, 1976, p. 4).

Consequently, one cannot effectively address linguistic differences without acknowledging and respecting cultural differences. Conversely, one cannot respect cultural differences without acknowledging and understanding the importance of a person's language. A child thinks and understands the world in his/her language. Language is intricately tied to a child's identity. Ignoring or devaluing the child's native language is denying an important part of who the child is and the rich store of past and present cultural experiences the child brings to school. Thus, it is critical for a classroom teacher to acknowledge and respect a child's home language, whether it is a completely different language or a variant of English, such as African-American English.

Bilingual/Bicultural Children

A teacher's goal should be to help LEP children become bilingual so they can have access to two cultures. Unfortunately, many children, when we try to teach them English, lose their primary language (Wong-Fillmore, 1990). Children living in the United States learn that English is the primary language of education, business, mass communications and government. English is associated with success and high

status. In an effort to be part of this new, successful and high-status community, and not to stand out or be different, LEP children may give up speaking their native language. Teachers are likely to foster this rejection by not demonstrating respect for a child's language and culture and by encouraging a child to speak English even while at home (Wong-Fillmore, 1990; Wong-Fillmore & Valadez, 1986).

This move away from speaking one's native language may have unanticipated consequences for home life. If a child's parents are not proficient in English and the child begins speaking English at home, communication between child and parents often erodes. Parents lose their ability to communicate important values to their children and to pass on important cultural traditions and lessons. Family unity and closeness may be sacrificed when children adopt English as their primary language. Instead of encouraging parents and children to practice English at home, parents should be assisted in helping their children become more proficient speakers of their native language.

Ironically, the advantage of speaking a second language is touted by the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies (Myer, 1985), while the resource of a second language brought to school by many language-minority children is ignored. The advocates of foreign-language study admonish schools to put more emphasis on teaching foreign languages, while immigrant children are rapidly mainstreamed in such a way that many of them lose their mother tongue and later qualify for foreign-language instruction in their native language (Wyner, 1989). Maintaining and developing LEP students' home languages is an obvious way to enhance individuals' development, helping them to become bilingual/bicultural, while also helping to overcome foreign-language incompetence in the United States.

Limited-English-Proficient Students—A Diverse Group

Children who do not speak English or have limited knowledge of English are often classified generally as Limited-English Proficient (LEP). Many different groups, however, come under this heading, each group with unique educational needs. Some diverse groups included under the label LEP, according to Myer (1985), are: 1) Immigrant children educated in their native language but with little or no exposure to English. They need assistance with English and with understanding the new culture in which they are now living. 2) Immigrant children with little or no exposure to English and, due to political or economic turmoil, little or no education in their native language. These children need to learn basic educational concepts as well as knowledge of English and American culture. 3) Immigrant children who have learned some English in their previous countries but are not familiar with American culture. Such children have a head start but will still need assistance with the language and culture. 4) U.S.-born children in nonEnglish-speaking homes. These children may know little English but have the advantage of being familiar with the culture.

Stages in Learning a Second Language

Within each of the above groups, children will be at different stages of learning English (Myer, 1985). When children are first introduced to a new language community, they generally listen actively and try to make sense of the language. They will say little or nothing. Children begin to understand simple and familiar English long before they are ready or able to verbalize for themselves in the new language. As

children become more familiar with the language, they will begin imitating simple phrases and statements in context. As they gain experience and confidence, they will go beyond imitating and will begin to experiment with the language. Language is now used to create new communications. Many errors in grammar and pronunciation are made at this stage. Eventually children have internalized most of the rules and can use more complex structures and make fewer errors. They are now able to express complex ideas in their new language. At each stage teachers need to be supportive and provide lessons and activities appropriate for the child's stage of language learning.

Learning a Language Takes Time

Learning a language is a gradual process. Some research suggests that words must be heard over 200 times before they are a part of a learner's repertoire. While competence in informal communication in social settings may develop in a few years, it may take four to seven years to become proficient in formal and context-reduced environments (Cheng 1987). Because informal, context-imbedded language is acquired first and most rapidly, teachers should be careful not to assume LEP children know more English than they actually do. For example, even though a child appears to be fluent in English on the playground, a classroom lecture on the Civil War, unless accompanied by many extralinguistic cues, may still be beyond the child's comprehension level.

Language learning takes as long, if not longer, for younger children. It is often believed that young children learn a second language more easily and more quickly than older children or adults, but research evidence does not support this belief. The only aspect of language learning in which younger children seem to do better is the development of a more native-like accent and pronunciation (Soto, 1991).

Attitudes and Motivation Are Important

Language learning is greater when children have positive attitudes about the language and are motivated to learn it. Most children learn English without making a conscious decision to do so. Children learn a second language because it meets their needs. They learn English so they can interact with friends, learn interesting and relevant information, read for pleasure and understand movies and songs.

A teacher's warmth and interest in the LEP child will influence the student's attitudes about school, English speakers and the English language. More specifically, LEP children need to know by the teacher's words and actions that their language and culture are respected. They must also sense that the teacher has faith in their ability to learn and believes they are worthwhile persons (Myer, 1985; Perez 1979). Children who feel valued and self-confident are more likely to be successful second-language learners.

Language Diversity in America

The United States has a long history of language diversity. Oftentimes we forget that historically language has been an issue for all but the English immigrants to America. The vast majority of native English-speaking individuals in the United States are descendants of Americans who came to the country speaking a language other than English. Historically, it took four generations for a family to move from being

monolingual in a nonEnglish language to being monolingual in English (Valdes, 1990). First-generation immigrants principally spoke their native language. Their facility with English was likely minimal or nonexistent. (It is interesting to note that in the United States in the late 1700s, Western European groups, such as the French, Dutch and Germans, set up their own schools using the language of the largest group as the language of instruction [Williams, 1991].) The second generation spoke some English but used their parents' language primarily. Third-generation Americans used English primarily, together with some limited fluency in their grandparents' language. Fourth-generation Americans usually spoke only English. With such a progression to English, it would not be unusual for children to be unable to communicate with their great-grandparents.

When native English speakers resent the time it takes to communicate with persons limited in their knowledge of English or suggest that immigrants should learn English or leave, they might do well to consider the experiences of their own ancestors. Learning a language and a culture takes time. Many native English speakers do not need to look back very many generations to find family members who were themselves limited in English proficiency.

TEACHING LIMITED-ENGLISH-PROFICIENT CHILDREN IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM

If we were to consider pedagogical effectiveness and instructional efficiency, children would be taught content in their native language (Williams, 1991). English would be taught as a second language. It only makes sense that children will learn skills and content more quickly and more easily in the language they know best. How much would we learn if obliged to attend an important education lecture given in a language in which we were not proficient? It takes years for children to become fluent in a new language; while in the process of learning that new language, they miss much of the content being taught.

Unfortunately, for many political and economic reasons beyond the scope of this article, bilingual or English-as-a-Second-Language classrooms are unavailable to many limited-English-proficient students (see, for example, Ruiz, 1991; Williams, 1991). Thus, the responsibility of doing the best one can to help LEP children retain their home language, and learn English and subject content at the same time, falls upon the regular, often English-proficient-only, classroom teacher. Here are some useful ideas for providing the best possible instruction under the above circumstances.

Teaching Style

There is evidence that specific styles of teaching can influence the amount of English a LEP student will learn and, consequently, the amount of content the student learns. The following strategies, synthesized from the work of Myer (1985), Wong-Fillmore and Valadez (1986) and Wong-Fillmore (1985, 1989), can help the regular classroom teacher work more effectively with LEP students while teaching the usual subject matter.

Teacher-directed activities. Research indicates that children learn the most English in classrooms with the greatest number of teacher-directed activities.

Children need as many opportunities as possible to interact with good language models. In teacher-directed classrooms, children spend more time listening and responding to a good language model. Individualized classrooms with individual work assignments do not appear to foster language development because the amount of language practice a child gets depends on individual circumstances. Shy or unassertive children may have little opportunity to interact in English in such a classroom.

Patterns and routines. Children in classrooms with teachers who follow distinct patterns day after day, who have established routines and consistency in organization, learn more English than students in less-structured classrooms. In classrooms with patterns and routines, children don't have to figure out what is going on every day. They can concentrate on the language and what they are supposed to be learning.

Student participation. The presence of structured ways in which students participate also assists students to learn English. A teacher might first ask for volunteers, then request group responses and finally establish turn-taking that requires every student to contribute at some point. Of course, questions directed to LEP students should be geared to their language abilities. Unfortunately, in many classrooms children who know the language are given more practice and feedback than children who are learning English. This is particularly true in classrooms where only volunteers (i.e., the most assertive students) participate.

Presentation style. LEP students learn more English when the teacher takes special care to speak clearly and use concrete references, repetitions, rephrasings, gestures, visual aides and demonstrations. It is important to remember that the child who does not receive instruction in his/her native language is totally dependent on the regular classroom teacher's ability to make communication meaningful.

The teaching strategies described above may not be the best examples of creative teaching, but they do appear to help LEP students become more successful at language learning.

Appropriate Content

Children need content that is on an appropriate cognitive level. Giving a kindergarten workbook to a LEP 4th-grader who was performing at grade level before coming to the United States is not appropriate. To learn a second language, children need to be interested in learning it. Materials far below their grade level are often embarrassing and uninteresting; consequently, children may soon lose interest in school and learning English. Inappropriate materials can also lead to permanent tracking in lower levels. Whenever possible, content and supporting activities (adapted for the LEP child) should be drawn from grade-level curriculum.

Realistic Expectations

Teachers should ask themselves, "If I did not understand English, would I be able to get some meaning from what is occurring in the classroom?" Make it possible, through the use of extralinguistic cues, for the LEP child to get something out of every lesson. It is important to recognize that LEP students will not get everything in the curriculum at the level appropriate for native English speakers. Realistic expectations with respect to language learning and understanding of content are critical.

Native Language Support Materials

Every effort should be made to get some support materials for instruction in the native language. Some libraries, refugee centers and cultural centers have books to help nonEnglish-speaking students who are literate in their home languages. Distributors of children's books and dictionaries in foreign languages have excellent materials (see resource section at end of chapter). Textbook publishers also have foreign-language editions of some of their textbooks. Addison Wesley, for example, has a math series in Spanish identical to the English version. A parent or volunteer who speaks the child's language can also be recruited to read to the child in the native language and tutor when appropriate.

Learn About the Culture and Language

Teachers should become familiar with the languages and cultures of the students they teach. Primarily, cultural differences must be recognized and respected. By learning about cultural and linguistic differences, the teacher can be more responsive to the child's emotional and instructional needs. For example, some Native-American children may interpret a teacher's normal teaching voice as loud, indicating anger or meanness (Grove, 1976). Children from some cultures may have been taught that it is inappropriate to volunteer information. Knowledge of values and beliefs, such as concepts of kinship, family patterns and appropriate social proximity, are particularly necessary for a teacher to communicate effectively with family members.

A teacher who learns to speak some of the child's language—even if only a few words and phrases—can enhance the child's self-image and help other students recognize that the teacher values and appreciates other languages (Perez, 1979). If the teacher makes mistakes, the child may have the satisfaction of helping the teacher and perhaps feel rewarded, accomplished and important for knowing something the teacher doesn't know.

Effective Teaching Strategies That Benefit All Children

Several general teaching strategies currently being implemented in many elementary schools can be especially helpful for LEP children. The use of cooperative-learning groups and peer or cross-age tutoring can benefit all children (Cazden, 1988). With a LEP child, it is important to examine your learning objective before deciding in which group or team to place the child. Generally, heterogeneous groups are recommended. But, if a child knows little or no English and the content is very important, placing the child with a bilingual child would be a real advantage. If there is a bilingual volunteer, it might be appropriate to place children who speak the same foreign language in a group together with that volunteer. Again, this is to be done when content learning is more important than the acquisition of English. If language learning is considered more important, the LEP child should be placed with compassionate and competent speakers of English (Wong-Fillmore, 1989).

Whole-language programs are also beneficial for LEP children (Abramson, Seda & Johnson, 1991; Hudelson, 1986). Whole-language classrooms provide many opportunities for rich, meaningful interactions with language. Children are encouraged to see learning about language, both oral and written, as natural and exciting. They are allowed to work at their own levels and to support one another in their individual efforts. Print-rich environments that include daily journal writing are perfect for LEP

children who are learning a new language. Predictable books that help LEP children learn about structural regularities of the language are also highly recommended (Hough, Nurss & Enright, 1986; Moustafa, 1980).

TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES

A limited-English-proficient child may feel isolated not only because of the inability to communicate with others, but also because other students see the student as different and inferior and thus may avoid, tease or exclude the child. How one speaks and what language someone speaks immediately evoke certain attitudinal reactions in the listener (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Individuals associate certain ways of talking with particular persons who use that language. Social and racial attitudes are mixed up with these associations. Attitudes children form about language differences may be based on personal experiences, or a child may have learned such attitudes indirectly from hearing or observing the views of other people. Some languages and accents have greater stigmatizing power than others.

Teachers must work to eliminate stereotypes and misconceptions children hold regarding speakers of other languages or speakers of nonstandard varieties of English. Children then learn that no language or dialect is intrinsically good or bad, correct or incorrect. All languages are tools for communicating ideas within a given speech community (Taylor, 1986).

Activities To Build Understanding of Language Differences

In learning about languages and language differences, children gain insights into culture and increase their understanding and acceptance of cultural and linguistic minorities. Here are some possible activities.

- Have a person who speaks another language give a lesson and assignment to the class in a foreign language. Afterward, have the children express reactions. Discuss with them the feelings of nonEnglish-speaking people who often may not be able to understand much of what is going on around them. Help the children to realize that people generally don't give much thought to language unless put in a position where *they* cannot understand what someone is saying. You may want to compare it to oxygen. Nobody focuses on the critical need for oxygen until put into a situation where it is lacking. Have the children discuss how they can help nonEnglish- or limited-English-speaking people in the United States.

- International movies can provide sensitizing experiences. Most large video stores rent subtitled international movies in French, Spanish, Japanese and Russian, which can be excellent resources to elicit discussion on languages. Preview the movie selected before using it as a teaching tool. Make sure segments shown are acceptable for children and do not create negative attitudes toward the language group. Since older children will likely read the subtitles, the teacher may want to play just the audio portion or hold a narrow piece of poster board over the subtitles. Students can discuss what they think was being said and how it feels not to understand a language. This activity can also be used to examine nonverbal behavior in other cultures.

- Help students understand how languages differ and how challenging it is to learn a new language by providing an opportunity for them to learn a new language. If the children can learn at least a little of a LEP child's language, communication

between the class and the child may be stimulated and the LEP child given the sense that he/she has something important to share.

□ Children usually recognize that individuals from other cultures may differ in clothing, housing and language. Generally, however, they do not understand that a language and culture may reflect ideas and concepts that do not exist in, or are quite different from, their own culture (Welton, 1990). The idea that others may look at the world quite differently is difficult to understand. Most children believe that one can translate one language directly into another without any loss of meaning.

Have a bilingual person talk about how to deal with two languages. Children may not realize that a simple statement such as "I miss you" would be constructed differently in, say, French where the literal translation would be, "You are lacking to me." English statements such as "I'll be darned" may have no direct translation in another language. The translator must search for a replacement that conveys a similar meaning in the other culture. Even words having direct counterparts in another language may have slightly different meanings. The word "sharp" in English can have a positive connotation such as a "sharp" thinker or "sharp" dresser. In Chinese, sharp connotes cunning and is considered a negative term. Children may be interested to recognize that even among speakers of the same language words can mean different things. In Ireland, for example, you would ask for a "lift to the store," not a "ride to the store."

□ Words are not the only conveyor of the message; sometimes they are only a small part. Much of a message is shared through culturally specific ways of speaking. Using a different tone of voice and different inflection each time can make the statement "It's raining outside" sound like a question, sound exciting or sound depressing. Help children understand that tone, pitch, tempo and use of pauses in speech convey different meanings. Discuss how a new learner of a language has to learn more than vocabulary.

Discuss how use of tone, pitch, tempo and pauses varies across cultures. Students may find it interesting to know that words in many Asian languages have only one syllable. Various meanings of the same one-syllable word are determined by pitch or tone (Welton, 1990). For example, the word "nam" in Vietnamese has different meanings, depending on pitch. Asian languages appear to have a singsong quality because of the varying pitch, a characteristic that also influences the writing of words. Since all variations in pitch would be difficult to represent when writing the language, many Asian languages use pictographs instead.

□ Share books that involve characters being placed in situations where they have to learn another language and culture. Discuss the role of language in the character's life. Help children develop understanding for what it must be like *not* to understand what is going on around you. (Examples of such books are found in the resource section of this chapter. Many interesting children's books dealing directly with language learning and differences are also listed in the resource section.)

□ If any children in the class have ever traveled in another country where they did not know the language, have them share their experience. It is important, however, to realize that English speakers generally have an advantage in world travel. The English language is widely spoken in many countries; English speakers are not likely to feel the sense of helplessness, confusion and fear as do immigrants entering the country for the first time.

□ For older children, lessons might be developed on the interesting and exciting historical evolution of various languages and dialects, regional differences and similarities and differences among various language systems. Many people don't realize that geographical barriers (e.g., mountains, rivers, lakes) have isolated certain groups of people and led to mild or extreme language differences among peoples geographically adjacent to each other.

□ Children may be puzzled when second-language learners sound different from native speakers. They may not be aware that sounds they take for granted, such as the "th" sound, do not exist in many other languages. Speakers of English as a second language will replace the unknown sound with one that is familiar. In the case of the "th," it may be replaced with a "zee" or a "d" sound. Children can be helped to understand that we develop a sound system based on the languages we hear when we are learning to talk. As we grow older, it is more difficult to produce sounds we did not learn when we learned how to talk. To illustrate the point more effectively, have children try to make sounds that other languages use but are not present in the English language. Examples are the rolled "r" in Spanish, the nasal vowel sounds in French or the clicks used in some African languages. If you are unable to model the sounds and do not have access to someone whose voice you can record, consult libraries with language-learning tapes to be checked out.

□ It is appropriate for children to begin understanding the value of various English dialects and accents. They should be taught that all varieties of English are valid forms of communication and that dialects and accents reflect cultural and social variations within a broader language group (Taylor, 1986). Children can be exposed to a variety of forms of English through reading stories aloud or listening to various dialects in taped stories. Regional and social dialects from various television programs can be discussed. Throughout such lessons, it is important that the class reflect a positive attitude of respectful listening in order to enjoy the variety of languages.

CASE STUDY

Julie Becker¹ has made improving education for LEP children in regular classrooms her professional goal. A classroom teacher in Salt Lake City, Utah, for 11 years, Julie has recently become an educational consultant for other teachers who are addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically different children. Julie's focus on linguistic minorities started several years ago when a boy from Mexico joined her 3rd-grade classroom. Miguel didn't speak any English. As many teachers do, Julie turned to her school district for support and materials, only to find she was basically on her own. Miguel would get some tutoring in English, but what happened in her own classroom was up to her. She took the challenge of teaching Miguel seriously and, thus, began receiving other LEP children entering the 3rd grade at her school.

Julie feels it is essential that a teacher's attitude toward receiving a nonEnglish-speaking child be one of acceptance, understanding and compassion. If the teacher shows signs of being upset, indifferent or frustrated, it will show; the entire class will

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feel the tension and respond in a negative manner. Julie acknowledges it is normal to feel frustrated, but that having a nonEnglish- or limited-English-speaking child in your classroom can be better than you think.

Creating a loving, caring, supportive and stimulating environment for every student is important to Julie. To achieve such an environment, she believes, all students must be engaged in the process. When a new student who did not speak English entered her classroom, she enlisted the help of students. She began by helping them understand what it is like to come to a different country and a new classroom where nothing is familiar and everything is written and spoken in another language. She encouraged students to empathize with new LEP children by talking to them and writing on the chalkboard in another language. (She suggests making up a language if you don't know one.)

Julie encouraged her students to help a child learn English and to make an effort to learn some of that child's language. Students were encouraged to include the new student in play at recess. Initially, a buddy was assigned each day to help the new child feel included and to help him/her learn playground and classroom routines. In class, Julie seated the child next to a capable and kind child and for a limited time encouraged the new child to copy, as needed, from this student's paper. She was pleased with the amount of peer tutoring, albeit nonverbal, that occurred in such situations. She always explained to the other children that the new student was not cheating; if any of them did not speak the language, they would receive this kind of assistance also.

Julie reinforced her students for being helpful and for teaching positive words and behaviors to new LEP students. She found that if children were not sensitively engaged in helping the new child, they might sometimes be engaged in counterproductive teaching. For example, some might think it great fun to teach a new child swear words and encourage him/her to act in socially unacceptable ways. She immediately confronted such behavior by English-speaking students.

Julie thinks that whenever a teacher receives a child from another culture, it is essential that the teacher gain some information on the child's background in order to communicate effectively with both the child and his/her family. In her class, when a student came from another country, the whole class spent time learning about the country and discussing cultural differences in an accepting and positive manner. Julie cautions, however, that it is important to know what a child's experience was in that country. Some teachers she has worked with have Cambodian children in their classes who came from refugee camps. Of course, such experiences deeply affected these students. American students need to understand how such experiences can affect a newcomer's perspective and behavior and thus be more understanding of the new classmate. At all times, respect and courtesy toward the child's culture should be shown.

In many ways, Julie helped her LEP students learn English and function easily in her classroom. She labeled furniture and resource items in the classroom in both English and the child's language and made passes with pictures and words to show someone getting a drink of water or going to the restroom, or a clock with the time the child was to go to English as a Second Language (ESL) class. This way, during the first days or weeks, the child could get his/her basic needs met without embar-

rassment. She encouraged and accepted any attempts the student made to communicate, recognizing that it can take months for a student to feel comfortable speaking in a new language. Julie soon learned the importance of using many visual cues and demonstrations with her class and repeating or paraphrasing important concepts and directions several times for the benefit of LEP students.

Julie found that LEP children can, for good reason, become behavior problems if asked to sit all day in class not understanding what is going on around them and getting little recognition for what they know. She tried to incorporate the child's language into many aspects of the classroom and to challenge native English-speaking students to learn another language. For example, when students were working in cooperative groups, she required them to ask for and name colors in Spanish. Her Spanish-speaking students became assets to their groups. She also included bonus spelling words for the whole class in the language of the LEP student. So that other children could feel comfortable engaging the LEP students in play and other activities, she taught her class basic verbs (e.g., to play, to help, to eat, to run, to work) in the foreign language. Students often asked her for more words as their desire increased to communicate in the child's language. Even if you don't know the language, Julie stated, you can look up basic words in a foreign-language dictionary and create picture flash cards. Asking the child to help with pronunciation is always a good idea.

Where possible, LEP children were provided storybooks to read in their native language. She also encouraged LEP children to write stories in their home language while others wrote in English. The children were asked to share their stories in class orally just like everyone else. She felt that such efforts communicated to LEP children that she respected their language and that it was important to continue learning in one's home language. Julie felt this story sharing also helped English-speaking students develop empathy by getting a sample of what it was like for a LEP student to experience the situation of listening to an entire class read in English. These experiences also demonstrated to the rest of the class that she, as the teacher, valued different languages.

Julie admits that some LEP children may not want public attention, particularly if they have been in the United States for a while and have developed the attitude that speaking a language other than English is not prestigious. Such children may feel uncomfortable if asked to translate or speak their native language. They do not want to appear different. Obviously, their desire not to use their native language should be respected. Any undue pressure to speak their home language in an English environment will simply add to their discomfort.

Julie said it was important for her to give up expecting LEP children to meet the same academic requirements as the other students. The curriculum needs to be regularly adjusted so that there are challenging but not overwhelming activities for the LEP child. For example, in spelling, LEP children were given a shorter set of words with additional words added gradually as language mastery developed. As mentioned earlier, words in the child's native language were included and given as bonus words to the entire class.

In adjusting the curriculum, giving up some of the teacher's grading expectations is important. Julie would encourage teachers to reduce some of their stress in evaluating LEP children by initially grading only in some areas. As the child gains more facility with English, areas can be added. It is senseless, in her opinion, to feel you

must grade LEP children on the same scale as native English speakers. Grades based on assignments in a language a child does not understand are hardly fair assessments and serve only to discourage a child at this point. With her LEP students, Julie sometimes graded only in math and handwriting during the first session. With the first report card, she sent a handwritten note to the parents so they would understand why she was not grading in all areas. When she could not get the note translated, she sent it in English. Fortunately, the parents either had enough English to understand the note or they found someone to translate it. Julie believes that communication in English is better than no communication at all.

Julie tried to coordinate her work with LEP students with whatever kind of special instruction they were receiving, finding it was often possible to integrate and reinforce the learning taking place in these other settings. Taking time to find out what the child is being taught by an ESL teacher or tutor can help the teacher create a more consistent and integrated learning environment.

Julie accepts language diversity in her classroom and takes advantage of it. As demonstrated by this short case study, nonEnglish-speaking students do create extra work for the classroom teacher, but they also give teachers and English-speaking students a chance to grow in their understanding, knowledge and acceptance of language and cultural differences. In turn, LEP children with teachers like Julie can learn English and acquire knowledge in a positive, supportive environment that respects their home culture and language.

CONCLUSION

All in all, there is much we can do to help LEP children learn English and function more effectively in English-speaking classrooms. But, teaching English to LEP students is only part of what teachers should be striving to do. As educators, we must work hard to assure that the price these children pay for learning English is not the loss of their mother tongue and cultural identity. We must also assist all students to recognize the worth of all languages and to see fluency in another language as an advantage rather than a stigma.

RESOURCES

Books for Children

These books are about adjustment to American culture by immigrant children and language differences generally. Although some are guilty of providing "pat" answers to difficult and complex problems, they do raise important issues and can be used to discuss discrimination and help children learn respect for languages other than their own.

- Atkinson, M. (1979). *Maria Teresa*. Chapel Hill, NC: Lollipop Power. [Gr. 1-4]
- Feelings, M. (1976). *Moja means one: Swahili counting book*. Garden City, NY: Dial.
- Gilson, J. (1985). *Hello, my name is Scrambled Eggs*. Fairfield, NJ: Lothrop. [Gr. 5-7]
- Haskins, J. (1982). *The new Americans: Cuban boat people*. Enslow. [Gr. 6-9]
- Levine, E. (1989). *I hate English*. New York: Scholastic Inc. [Gr. 1-3]
- Lord, B. B. (1984). *In the year of the boar and Jackie Robinson*. New York: Harper & Row. [Gr. 4-6]
- Lewiton, M. (1959). *Candita's choice*. New York: Harper & Row. [Gr. 4-6]

- Michels, B., & White, B. (Eds.). (1983) *Apples on a stick: The folklore of black children*. East Rutherford, NJ: Coward-McCann. [Gr. 3-6]
- Rosario, I. (1981). *Idalia's project ABC: An urban alphabet book in English and Spanish*. Orlando, FL: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Simon, N. (1967). *What do I say?* Niles, IL: Whitman.
- Simon, N. (1969). *What do I do? ¿Que Hago?* Niles, IL: Whitman.
- Stanek, M. (1989). *I speak English for my mom*. Niles, IL: Whitman. [Gr. 1-3]
- Surat, M. M. (1983). *Angel child, dragon child*. Milwaukee, WI: Raintree. [Gr. 3-5]
- Wartski, M. C. (1980). *The long way home*. Philadelphia, PA.: Westminster. [Gr. 6-9]

Resources for Adults

In addition to the following, many of the citations in the reference section would also be helpful.

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- Center for New American Media (Producer). Kolker, A., & Alvarez, L. (Directors). (1986). *American tongues* [Film]. New York: Center for New American Media. An excellent film on American dialects and accents.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. A study of children from two different social groups learning to use language. The politics and impact of language are explored.

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Gender Equity in the Classroom

Beverly Hardcastle Stanford

In their "Report Card" on the progress of sex equity since the passage of Title IX in 1972, Myra and David Sadker and Lynette Long share disturbing news:

□ Girls start out ahead of boys in speaking, reading, and counting . . . [but] through school, their achievement test scores show significant decline. . . . Girls receive fewer academic contacts, less praise and constructive feedback, fewer complex and abstract questions, and less instruction on how to do things for themselves. . . . Girls are the only group in our society that begins school ahead and ends up behind.

□ Boys are more likely to be scolded and reprimanded in classrooms, even when the observed conduct and behavior of boys and girls does not differ. . . . [Boys] are more likely to be grade repeaters and are less likely to complete high school. (1989, pp. 114-116)

These findings indicate that at the elementary school level, there is still much work to be done if sex equity is to be attained for the benefit of both sexes. Stated broadly, it seems that the school environment, confounded by society's sex-role socialization of children, stretches and stresses boys while it encourages girls to let their abilities atrophy. Of particular concern are the consequences of such patterns. Again, the facts in the report card by the Sadkers and Long emphasize the significance and urgency of the problem:

□ Males outperform females substantially on all subsections of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Testing Program Examination (ACT). The largest gap is in the math section of the SAT, followed by the ACT natural-science reading, the ACT math usage, and the ACT social-studies reading.

□ Girls attain only 36 percent of the more than 6,000 National Merit Scholarships awarded each year.

□ Males are more likely to succumb to serious disease and be victims of accidents or violence.

□ A woman with a college degree will typically earn less than a male who is a high school dropout. (1989, pp. 114-117)

Why are educators not sounding the alarm and demanding changes to alleviate these inequities and their consequences? Why are teachers not working actively and conscientiously to promote sex equity? Why are so few researchers studying sex inequities? Perhaps the answer is that we have been overconfident, convinced that the

dramatic changes that came with the passage of Title IX had solved the problem. Sexism continues, however, doing its damage in subtle ways. Unintentional or deliberate, hidden or overt, sexism and the damage it causes need to be recognized and treated as serious concerns.

Sexism as a phenomenon can be distinguished by its scale from the individual discriminatory acts of prejudiced people. Sexism is built into the social system itself and pervades the values of the culture. Educators would be overwhelmed if they were to attempt the impossible task of correcting all the inequities caused by society's sexism, and we cannot reasonably ask that of them. More reasonable, however, is the challenge to educators that they address the inequities institutionalized in the organizational structure of schools, the curriculum selected to be taught, the learning strategies employed, and their ongoing instructional and informal interactions with students. In their educational realm, educators also may move beyond sex equity, a concern for the equal rights of both sexes, to gender equity, a regard for the qualitative differences in the perspectives, needs and learning styles of the two sexes. Through a respect for gender equity, they may resist gender-biased behaviors that convey "the assumption that the contributions, experiences, and values of men are more important than those of women" (Childers, 1984, p. 201).

RELEVANT RESEARCH

Because of the subtle nature of sexism that exists in schools today, we need to spend time understanding the problem before we seek solutions. We begin by reviewing two strands of relevant research studies: those that focus directly on sex-equity issues and those that contribute to theory building in the broad area of psychological sex differences. In the first strand are studies that analyze teacher-student interactions and compare male and female students' academic achievements. In the second are those that focus on self-imposed sex segregation in early childhood, communication styles, play preferences, moral perspectives and girls' transitions into adolescence. The problem of interweaving the two strands, which on the surface may seem to be at counter purposes, is a challenge, but one worth accepting. In our efforts to seek creative and ethical solutions, researchers and teachers can hold as a common goal the desire to determine and develop school and classroom climates in which students may grow to their potential without barriers or excessive demands because of their sex.

Research on Sex Equity

Teacher-student interactions. The two major patterns that emerge consistently in research studies on teacher-student interactions and sex discrimination are: 1) teachers give boys more attention, both positive and negative and 2) boys demand more teacher attention.

In a two-year study of teacher communication patterns with children in nine 1st- and nine 5th-grade classrooms, Phyllis Blumenfeld and her colleagues found that boys received a significantly greater portion of teacher communication and attention than girls. In the second year of the study, when the children were in the 2nd and 6th grade, the researchers found the same pattern and additionally noted that boys received more negative feedback on their conduct (Eccles & Blumenfeld, 1985).

Summarizing findings from the above study and those she conducted with other colleagues, Jacquelynne Eccles concludes that "1) males are yelled at and criticized publicly more than females and 2) males are more likely than females to monopolize teacher-student interaction time" (1989, p. 49). In her discussion of the extensive research, she provides a vivid illustration of inequity in class participation, describing a group of participants we can refer to as classroom "stars":

We have now observed in over 150 math classrooms in southeastern Michigan; in 40 of them, we coded every interaction the teacher had with each student over a ten-day period. Over half the students *never* talked to the teacher during the 10 days. Others had 14 or more interactions with the teacher *every hour*. Most of these latter students were male. (1989, p. 49)

The Sadkers conducted a study of classroom interactions in over 100 4th-, 6th- and 8th-grade classrooms in four states and the District of Columbia from 1980-84. In all subjects and at all three grade levels, they found that:

Male students were involved in more interactions than female students. It did not matter whether the teacher was Black or White, female or male; the pattern remained the same. Male students received more attention from teachers. (Sadker & Sadker, 1986, p. 512)

They found that boys called out and demanded their teachers' attention eight times more often than girls and, significantly, when teachers responded they tended to accept boys' answers and to correct girls' behavior, advising that they raise their hands. The Sadkers concluded that "boys are being trained to be assertive; girls are being trained to be passive—spectators relegated to the sidelines of classroom discussion" (1986, p. 513).

The Sadkers characterized the classrooms as a whole as having a general environment of inequity. They categorized students into three general groups on the basis of the number of their interactions with the teacher during class sessions. One group, described as spectators, did not interact with the teacher. Approximately one-fourth of the students in a class made up this group. The majority of the class fit into the second group, which had a nominal level of interaction, about one interaction per class session. A third group, only 10 percent or less of the class, were the "interaction-rich students who participated in more than three times their fair share of interactions with the teacher" (Sadker & Sadker, 1986, p. 513). These were similar to the classroom stars Eccles described above. The Sadkers concluded that "students in the same classroom, with the same teacher, studying the same material were experiencing very different educational environments" (1986, p. 513).

They also found that the type of feedback the boys in a class received was more specific and consequently more instructive. They classified feedback into four groups: nonspecific acceptance (over half the comments); specific praise (approximately 10 percent); specific criticism (approximately 15 percent); and remediation with instructions designed to guide students to the correct response (over one-third). While the less instructive, nonspecific acceptance comments were distributed fairly equitably, teachers gave boys significantly more praise, criticism and remediation than girls.

In a review of the research on male and female teacher-student interactions, Jere Brophy concluded that women and men teachers are more similar than different in

their interactions with male and female students and that "teachers do not systematically discriminate against students of the opposite sex" (Brophy, 1985, p. 137). He recommends that better, more complex and comprehensive research methods be used in studying teacher-student interactions, since a variety of variables such as teachers' experience, degree of gender-role adoption and the subject being taught are overlooked when comparisons are made on the basis of the sex of teachers only.

Achievement in math and science. The fields of math and science continue to be predominantly male domains today, with 85 percent of scientists and engineers being men (*Harvard Education Letter*, May/June 1990). Less than 6 percent of the doctorates and less than 10 percent of the masters in engineering went to women in 1984 (Eccles, 1989, p. 36). Girls seek college entry with about one year less physical science and one-half year less of math than do boys (*Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering*, 1986). Girls' interest in science drops by the end of 3rd grade, according to data collected by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and by the end of the middle grades, most girls decide that science is not for them (*Harvard Education Letter*, May/June 1990). The area of computers also appears to be an addition to the male domain. Only 24 percent of the children attending summer computer camps were girls (Kreinberg, Alper & Joseph, 1985).

Surprisingly, math achievement in the elementary and junior high school years is relatively similar for boys and girls. The few differences that do occur are at the elementary level and tend to favor girls (Campbell, 1986). But by high school, sex differences have increased and clearly favor boys. How the shift occurs is a concern to teachers at every level of school. Most who research in this area propose that girls are socialized away from math by their parents and teachers. For example, teachers may attend more to boys' work and efforts in math and selectively share with boys their enthusiasm for their chosen fields. Frequently, women who enter male-dominated fields attribute their decisions to the encouragement of a teacher, and "women who drop out of the math curriculum or out of other nontraditional majors in college often attribute their decisions to a teacher who actively discouraged their interests" (Eccles & Blumenfeld, 1985, p. 112).

Research on Sex Differences

Recent research on sex differences in behavior and perspectives also offers insights that can help teachers better understand and more equitably teach their students. Of particular interest are observations on the self-imposed gender segregation of early childhood, differences in communication styles, styles of play, moral perspectives and girls' transitions into adolescence. We review each area briefly here.

Sexism in early childhood. Eleanor Maccoby, co-author with Carolyn Jacklin of the classic text *The Psychology of Sex Differences* and recipient of the 1985 American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Award for Distinguished Contributions to Educational Research, reviewed the research on sex differences in early childhood in her acceptance speech for the AERA award. She proposed that children segregate themselves by gender and that 6- and 7-year-olds are the most gender segregated age group (1985). She noted that when asked if it was all right for a boy to play with dolls, the 4- or 5-year-old child would reply, "Yes, because it's his mind," but the 6- or 7-year-old would say vehemently, "He's wrong!" and "Yes, his parents should punish him for doing so." Maccoby proposes that children in this "sexist" age group may be

overgeneralizing as they do in language when they learn a rule and overuse it at first. Thus, when children first learn the distinctions between masculine and feminine behavior, they base their behavior and that of others on rigid, discriminatory expectations for boys and girls.

Vivian Paley, a master teacher at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools and keen observer of children in this age group, holds a similar belief. In her book *Boys and Girls*, she writes: "Kindergarten is a triumph of sexual self-stereotyping. . . . They think they have invented the differences between boys and girls and, as with any new invention, must prove that it works" (1984, p. ix).

Whether these differences are innate or caused by early socialization is a question researchers continue to ask. What is clear is that self-imposed sex segregation occurs in early childhood, be it at the age of 5 as Paley suggests or 6 and 7 as Maccoby claims. The development of identity, which includes gender, is an important and serious task for young children.

Significant are the early findings in one ongoing study that indicate sex stereotypical play patterns may not be as rigid as Paley and Maccoby propose. Since 1982, Kyle Pruett, a psychiatrist in the Yale Child Study Center, has been conducting a longitudinal study of 16 families in which the father is the primary child caregiver while the mother works. He reports that:

The boys are masculine and the girls are feminine . . . but when they were 4 or 5 . . . the stage at preschool when the boys leave the doll corner and the girls leave the block corner, these children didn't give up one or the other. The boys spent time playing with the girls in the doll corner, and the girls were building things with blocks, taking pride in their accomplishments. (Shapiro, 1990, p. 65)

Communication style differences. Another area that Maccoby reviewed in her AERA address was communication style differences. She reported that fairly clear sex differences appear in the communication styles of boys and girls and noted that by listening to the ways children talked to each other, researchers found that girls more frequently express agreement with other children, let others have a turn to talk and acknowledge what others said when they themselves begin to talk. In girls' groups, the functions of speech seemed to be to: 1) create and maintain relations of closeness and equality; 2) criticize others in acceptable ways, usually by disguising the criticism; 3) interpret accurately the speech of other girls. Boys' styles were found to be more direct:

They give more commands, more refusals to comply, more threats, more boasts of authority, more interruptions, more giving of information, more heckling of the speaker, more telling jokes or suspenseful stories, more topping of someone else's story and more name calling. (Maccoby, 1985)

The functions of boys' speech seem to be to: 1) assert one's position of dominance, 2) attract and maintain an audience and 3) assert oneself when other speakers have the floor (Maccoby, 1985).

These contrasts in communication styles and functions between the two sexes can, in part, explain a research finding presented earlier, that boys demand and receive

more teacher attention than girls. If the purpose of boys' speech is to assert themselves, then speaking up in class more would be reasonable behavior for them. If the purpose of girls' speech is to create and maintain closeness and equality, then girls would be more inclined to share class speaking times with others.

Differences in styles of play. In a study of 181 5th-grade, White, middle-class Connecticut children aged 10 and 11, Janet Lever discovered some clear differences in the ways the boys and girls played. She observed the children during school recess, lunch period and physical education classes, and she had them keep diaries of how they spent their free time. Her study results indicated that: 1) boys play more out of doors than girls; 2) boys play more often in large, age-heterogeneous groups; 3) boys play competitive games more than girls do; 4) boys' games last longer than girls' games (Lever, 1978).

Lever's analysis of the fourth finding is especially interesting. Why did the boys' games last longer? She speculated that the boys' games were more complex and required a higher level of skill and hence were less boring and more likely to be extended as a consequence. The girls' games had fewer rules and less often required dividing into teams. She also observed an interesting phenomenon when disputes arose in the children's games. The boys were able to resolve their differences more effectively than the girls, conducting their arguments while continuing to play. When quarrels arose, the boys seemed to enjoy their ongoing legalistic debates as much as the game itself. In contrast, when disputes erupted for the girls, they tended to end their games.

Considering the implications of her research findings, Lever proposed that since the girls had not participated in complex games, they could have missed out on training that would serve them in future careers in occupations that require teamwork and leadership skills. The specific skills that are provided in boys' games, according to Lever, are:

The ability to deal with diversity in memberships where each person is performing a special task; the ability to coordinate actions and maintain cohesiveness among group members; the ability to cope with a set of impersonal rules; and the ability to work for collective as well as personal goals. (1978, p. 480)

These skills obviously are essential in the corporate world and in leadership positions in a full range of occupations.

In her discussion on the complexity of children's play, Lever stressed the need for further research that focuses on the ties between childhood play structures and later success in adult work settings. She cited a study by Hennig and Jardim (1977) in which 25 women in top management positions were found to be former tomboys, and she pointed out that "elite boarding schools and women's colleges, many of which stress team sports, have been credited with producing a large portion of this nation's female leaders" (Lever, 1978, p. 481).

Different moral perspectives. Carol Gilligan, Harvard psychology professor and author of the groundbreaking book *In a Different Voice* (1982), argues for a different interpretation of Lever's study findings as well as a different perspective on boys' and girls' psychological and moral development in general. Rather than seeing girls as

missing out on crucial training for future careers because they failed to participate in competitive games, Gilligan observes that girls' play "replicates the social pattern of primary human relationships. . . and the development of empathy and sensitivity" (1979, p. 436). She recognizes the personal and relational value of the skills gained in girls' play rather than the market value of the skills that are gained in boys' play.

In Gilligan's extensive research and theoretical writings, she offers a view of moral development different from that proposed by Jean Piaget (1932) and Lawrence Kohlberg (1976). In their models, moral development is seen as occurring in a sequence of hierarchical stages, from a stage of dependence on others for doing the right thing to an autonomous stage where moral decisions are based on universal, ethical principles. Moral development, according to this perspective, is governed by an ethic of justice and directed by "an injunction to respect the rights of others and thus to protect from interference the right to life and self-fulfillment" (Gilligan, 1977, p. 511). In contrast, Gilligan proposes that moral development is also shaped by an ethic of care, an injunction to be responsible for responding to the troubles in the world. One view is not superior to the other, according to Gilligan, but the model proposed by male psychologists has been the dominant view.

Different transitions into adolescence. Since the early 1980s, Gilligan and some of her colleagues have been studying girls' development, seeking evidence of the moral perspective described above, which emerged from extensive studies of women. They found girls before the age of 11 or 12 asserted themselves with ease and confidence. In early adolescence, however, their assertiveness dropped markedly and they began to "equivocate, and sometimes even take desperate action to preserve a relationship or meet the expectations of others" (*Harvard Education Letter*, 1990, July/August, pp. 5-6). The self-doubt and confusion these adolescent girls experience and the accommodations they make by censoring their expressions result in what could be regarded as a period of public intellectual dormancy.

This overview of research relevant to sexism in schools shows us that the problem is greater than it appears on the surface. Teachers and educators of teachers should be particularly concerned by the fact that while girls enter schools ahead of boys in their academic skills, they leave school scoring on achievement tests behind boys. We should similarly be concerned by: 1) the drop in girls' achievement test scores as they proceed through schools, 2) the low confidence and interest girls show in the fields of math and science and 3) the apparent dormancy girls seem to enter in early adolescence. Fortunately, the research also reveals that teachers can use strategies and classroom designs to bring about the needed changes.

CREATING A SEX- AND GENDER-EQUITABLE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

In this section, teachers wanting to ensure that they are providing a sex-equitable classroom environment can begin by becoming informed of the provisions of Title IX, the law that forbids discrimination in school activities and programs on the basis of sex. Next we look into classroom procedures and teaching strategies that counteract sex discrimination and promote equity. Finally, we look at the elements of a sex- and gender-equitable environment.

The Provisions of Title IX

The major source. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the major source for teachers to draw upon to determine their legal obligations regarding sexism and sex-role stereotyping in the classroom. The law states that "No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. . . ." The law was passed in 1972, but schools were given until 1975 to make adjustments to be in compliance with it. In the area of secondary school athletics, the compliance was extended to 1978. Violations of the law can result in withholding of federal funds.

Reason for being. Title IX came into being at a time when boys and girls were provided some distinctively different education programs and opportunities. The financing and scheduling of athletic programs were dominated by male interests and participation, and most female athletes were unable to go far with their talents. For instance, in 1969 the Syracuse, New York, school board allocated \$90,000 for boys' extracurricular sports and \$200 for girls' sports (Lever, 1978). In most schools, boys were counseled into the professional fields and girls were guided toward secretarial work, homemaking, nursing and teaching. Girls could not take industrial arts, boys could not take home economics classes and physical education classes were taught separately. Most significantly, sex-role stereotyping was promoted consciously and unconsciously to the detriment of girls especially, whose education and career options were limited dramatically as a consequence.

Extent of the law. The regulation applies to any educational institution, private or public, that receives financial aid from the federal government. Military academies and "educational institutions controlled by a religious organization holding religious tenets (such as the belief that sex segregation is divinely ordained) inconsistent with Title IX" (Williams, 1980) are the only institutions excluded. The 1984 Supreme Court decision in *Grove City College v. Bell* determined that only the programs and activities receiving federal funding, and not the entire institutions, were subject to the terms of Title IX. The reduction of the power of Title IX was significant as a consequence.

Applying the law. The provisions of the law fall into three broad areas: admission of students, treatment of students and employment. The middle section provides answers to a variety of questions of interest and relevance to teachers and administrators. For instance, would educators be violating the law if:

- ☐ For the same offense, they punished boys by having them stay after school and girls by having them remain in the classroom for recess?
- ☐ They established an all-male safety patrol?
- ☐ They had separate physical education classes?
- ☐ They kept a female student from playing on the football team?
- ☐ They used sex-biased tests?
- ☐ They used sex-biased textbooks?

The answer to all but the last of these questions is *yes*, they would be violating the terms of Title IX. Title IX specifically *prohibits*:

Provision of DIFFERENT aid, benefits, or services on the basis of sex; DENIAL of such aid, benefits, or services to persons of either sex; SEPARATE or DIFFERENT rules of behavior, punishments or other treatment, on the basis of sex; [and] LIMITATION of any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity on the basis of sex. (Sadker & Sadker, 1982, p. 44)

While physical education classes need to be coeducational, segregation of the sexes can occur for team sports when selections are based on competitive skills. The law permits separation of the sexes for contact sports but does not require it. Court cases challenging the contact sports provision resulted in the acceptance of qualified female players onto football teams because their schools did not have comparable teams for girls (Williams, 1980, pp. 154-155).

Title IX also requires counselors to give unbiased career and education guidance. In addition, the law prohibits schools from using achievement, aptitude and interest tests that are biased.

Because of concern for interfering with the terms of the First Amendment, however, lawmakers did not forbid the use of textbooks and curriculum materials that contain sex bias and sex stereotyping. The Sadkers point out that Title IX assumes that "local education agencies will deal with the problem of sex bias in curriculum materials in the exercise of their general authority and control over course content" (1982, p. 45).

Violations. To handle violations of Title IX, each institution must . . .

designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities . . . including any investigation of any complaint . . . and shall adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints. (*Federal Register*, May 9, 1980, pp. 30957-8) (Title IX Education Amendments of 1972)

In addition, grievances may be filed with the Office for Civil Rights in Washington, DC, or a regional branch, or made in a suit in court. Teachers who have questions or concerns regarding violations of Title IX are encouraged to begin by discussing them with their school district's designated Title IX representative.

Title IX provides the legal basis for ensuring both sexes equal access to courses and activities, equal opportunities and privileges and equal treatment in school. The law continues to be adjusted and revised in response to court resolutions of specific cases, pressures of special-interest groups and changing political and social conditions. Teachers can gain useful instruction on Title IX by reading Myra and David Sadker's book *Sex Equity Handbook for Schools* (1982).

Classroom Procedures and Teaching Strategies

In this section, we look into classroom procedures and teaching strategies that help reduce sex discrimination and promote equity. We focus on approaches for remedying the discrepancies made evident in the research presented earlier in the chapter. Included here are strategies for equalizing teacher-student interactions, promoting girls' achievements in math and science, countering self-imposed sex segregation in early childhood, strengthening girl's transitions into early adolescence and teaching about sexism directly.

Equalizing teacher-student interactions. To counteract the tendency for males to dominate classroom interactions, a number of strategies can be suggested. First, teachers need to become conscious of the degree and type of attention they give to members of each sex in classroom interactions. Then, they can make adjustments to treat the sexes equally in terms of the number of comments they make when giving students acceptance, praise, remediation and criticism. They should also resist efforts by "star" students to dominate teacher-student interactions. Ignoring them when they call out is one way; calling on students according to a systematic and equitable plan is another. A pattern can be devised ahead of time (e.g., alphabetically, skipping every second and third name, or following the chronology of the birthdays of children in the class). Teachers need to monitor continually the quality and quantity of the interactions they have with students of either sex.

Promoting girls' achievements in math and science. The discrepancies between boys and girls in math and science achievement call for a more pervasive approach. In studies of classrooms in which there were no sex differences in the achievements of students in math and science or in their views of their abilities in those areas, several clear patterns emerged: 1) students were more orderly and businesslike; 2) they had less of both extreme praise and criticism; 3) the teacher ensured equal student participation; 4) the teacher interacted with students more individually; 5) they held fewer public drills with the whole class (Eccles, 1989, p. 50).

Similar patterns were found in another study that researched classrooms in schools with the most favorable records for both boys and girls going on to take Advanced Placement courses in math and science (Casserly, 1980). In her review of the study, Eccles noted several additional features: 1) the teachers used more cooperative-learning strategies; 2) they designed more active, hands-on, open-ended learning situations; 3) they gave career guidance to their students, stressing the importance of math and science for other courses and future careers (Eccles, 1989, pp. 51-52).

In both studies, strategies incorporating competition were found to be of minimal value. Eccles observed, "Apparently, only a few students benefit from competitive environments in which a select group of students tend to monopolize the teacher-student interaction. The rest of the class suffers either in terms of their motivation or in terms of their actual learning" (1989, p. 53).

Several general strategies for teacher educators and administrators to use to increase the effectiveness of the teaching of mathematics are offered by Joy Wallace, director of the Northeast EQUALS. At the elementary level these are to 1) provide ways "for elementary teachers to increase their mathematics background in order to move beyond computation to creative problem solving and concept development and 2) develop ways to generate teacher confidence and enthusiasm for mathematics" (Wallace, 1986, p. 36).

Countering Self-imposed Sexism in Early Childhood

When kindergarten and early childhood teachers see children in their care behaving in sex stereotypical ways, they need not blame themselves or become discouraged. The children are responding naturally to a major developmental need, that of establishing their sexual identity. What should concern teachers and other adults are the parameters our culture has placed on the roles of males and females. Do the gender roles—to which children in this age group naturally and rigorously seek to conform—

limit, stress or stretch them? What answers do we give when children ask, "Can a boy do that?" and "Is it all right for a girl to do that?" Selma Greenberg warns:

If we accept the verdict of both lay and professional persons that the early childhood years are not only important in themselves but that their effects have lifelong impact, we must view seriously what children do during these years and perhaps view even more seriously what they do not do or avoid doing. (1985, p. 458)

Guidelines and specific activities to help young children see more equitable gender roles are given in the book *Anti-Bias Curriculum* (1989), in which the authors encourage teachers to expand children's play options and their awareness of gender roles. They suggest that teachers rearrange the play areas and supplement the costumes and materials they have in them. For instance, for the dramatic play center teachers can:

Put the woodworking table and tools into the "house" for making home repairs as well as wood constructions; put a typewriter, adding machine, and other materials in a "study." . . . Put the block area next to the dramatic play area for building work places (a market, a hospital, a gas station with mechanics). (1989, p. 51)

While recognizing and wanting to preserve the value of free play for children, the authors suggest that at times teachers can intervene and guide children to activities that develop new skills. To expand children's awareness of gender roles, the authors urge teachers to use literature that breaks down stereotypes (see list at end of chapter).

Strengthening girls' transitions into early adolescence. According to Gilligan and her colleagues, women teachers of 11- and 12-year-old girls appear to have unique opportunities to assist girls with their transition into adolescence. Such teachers should first reflect on themselves, examining the model of adult women that they convey to their students, and then openly value the thinking of girls. They should encourage girls to express their ideas and to risk disagreeing with others. Male teachers can help by encouraging their female students in similar ways and by being attuned to the psychological dilemma girls in this age group experience.

Teaching about sexism directly. As noted above, teachers may take advantage of sex stereotyping in their curricular materials by teaching lessons on discrimination with them. They may also invite to their classrooms individuals in nontraditional careers who can share not only their careers but discrimination experiences encountered in their studies and work.

Students can learn about sexism directly by doing field work to investigate it for themselves, such as interviewing people in their community who work in nontraditional jobs and evaluating their textbooks or magazine articles to determine bias. They can observe in classrooms, lunchrooms and on playgrounds to see whether discrimination is occurring.

Elements of a Sex- and Gender-Equitable Environment

In addition to the strategies and procedures recommended above, elements in the classroom environment contribute to the quality of equity in classrooms. These include the teacher, the physical environment and the curricular materials.

The teacher. Teachers who actively commit to creating nonsexist environments can make a difference (Eccles, 1989). Knowledge of the existence of sexism, sensitivity to evidence of it and a desire to counteract it are prerequisites for any effort to make a classroom environment sex equitable. Once teachers have witnessed evidence of sexism, they can objectively evaluate their current behaviors. A colleague, aide, volunteer, older student or even class member can assist by tallying the times the teacher calls on members of either sex during a lecture, recitation period or discussion. Teachers can tape record themselves and later analyze the tape, attending to the types of questions asked of boys and girls and the lengths of wait times given to them for their responses. After analyzing these, teachers can more readily monitor themselves while in the process of teaching. They may need to devise techniques similar to those discussed earlier to counteract the tendency of boys to dominate class discussions and student-teacher interactions. In all these efforts, the goal is for teachers to distribute their attention among their students in a fair manner.

In some areas, teachers need to provide more than equal treatment. Since "equity means freedom for both sexes to choose school and career activities without social censure" (Linn & Petersen, 1985, p. 53) and some school subjects and careers have been stereotyped as being masculine and feminine, teachers must actively encourage students to use their abilities and talents. Of particular concern are girls' low confidence, motivation and performance in areas of math and science. Teachers must attempt to promote girls' appreciations of math and science, help them find the relevance of math and science in their daily lives and encourage them to consider themselves as potential mathematicians and scientists. Fortunately, because of the seriousness of the problem, teachers now have available to them organizations, companies and resources devoted to enabling parents and educators to provide girls with equitable learning opportunities in math, science and, more recently, computers (see list of resources at end of chapter).

Finally, teachers must pay attention to their attitudes, the language they use and the models they present to students. Their biases and prejudices will be conveyed nonverbally or by an inadvertent phrase or a limiting word of counsel. The specific language teachers use is subtly powerful in defining the world to children and showing them their place in it. Taking time to adjust habitual language and learn new terms may seem wasteful and superficial to teachers, but once they get past the first awkwardness of using *mail carrier* for *mailman*, *police officer* for *policeman*, *spokesperson* for *spokesman*, *humanity* for *mankind*, and *nurturing* for *mothering*, they may notice that their own thinking changes. More important, they acquire a habit of scrutinizing their speech for sex-discriminating or stereotyping expressions, and they find it easier to detect and correct the language of others that limits, ignores or stereotypes either sex. The model that teachers set when they encounter speech or behavior that is sex discriminating or stereotyping will teach more than any planned lessons they do on equity.

The environment. The physical environment of a classroom reflects the equityability of its climate. Desks arranged in groupings, mixing boys and girls, indicate that both groups have value and should speak to each other and work together. Bulletin boards and display tables that advertise the ideas and accomplishments of men and women in all areas of the curriculum present a balanced picture of education for boys and

girls. Events from the world beyond the classroom relayed in newspaper and magazine clippings can remind students of both sexes of the seriousness of their classroom learning.

Teachers must take care that the imprint they place on the environment is broad and inclusive. Male teachers whose visual displays neglect literature and art and female teachers who similarly underplay science and math perpetuate the stereotypes equitable classroom teachers prefer to destroy. Androgyny, the incorporation of positive masculine and feminine characteristics within an individual, can be the guide word as teachers select subjects and materials to highlight in their classrooms.

Here, too, teachers need to be on guard for stereotyping images of either sex. Pictures of women in a home setting and men in work situations (e.g., male doctors, ministers or construction workers and female nurses, teachers or secretaries) should be used sparingly. Less obvious stereotypes are the pictures of women with children, men with adults, women in passive postures, men in the midst of activity and men as the only ones in leadership roles.

Curricular materials. Nondiscriminatory curricular materials can also contribute to a sense of equity in classrooms. In their *Sex Equity Handbook for Schools*, the Sadkers provide specific guidelines for evaluating books, textbooks and instructional materials to detect biases and stereotyping. The broad areas they highlight are invisibility, the underrepresentation of women and minorities; stereotyping, portraying women and men in rigid roles; imbalance/selectivity, presenting only one side of an issue; unreality, interpreting history and contemporary life without reference to discrimination and prejudice; fragmentation/isolation, treating issues related to minorities and women as tacked-on sections separate from the main content; and linguistic bias, using masculine terms and pronouns such as *forefathers* and the generic *he* (1982, pp. 72-73). Where these occur, teachers may address the sexism directly and conduct lessons or discussions on subtle forms of discrimination and their consequences.

Teachers can also supplement biased instructional materials with books, magazine features and news articles that counter discriminatory information and images. With math texts that "constantly focus on cooking problems involving females and construction problems involving males" (Wallace, 1986, p. 38), teachers can write revisions that reflect more equitable situations. Teachers may need to conduct research of their own on the roles that women played and the contributions they made in the various areas of the curriculum that they teach (a selection of available resources for such materials is provided at end of chapter).

A CASE STUDY OF GENDER-EQUITABLE TEACHING

The Teacher

How does someone who adamantly espouses gender equity implement it in the classroom? Carolyn DeMoss was the person to observe to find the answer. DeMoss accepted without hesitation the request to visit her classroom:

A 2nd Grade in June

It is June, and the temporary classroom that houses Carolyn's 2nd-grade class seems to spill over with projects from the year's activities. The busy walls and side tables

are testimony to the children's productivity. "Absolutely Amazing" is the headline for one bulletin board displaying submarine stories written by boys and girls in the class. The blackboard, the length of the room and focal point of the classroom, is nearly filled with assignments and reminders. In one corner is the announcement that Eli is "Queen for the Day" and Travis is "King for the Day." To the right of the blackboard is a news bulletin board with clippings about Mars, hostages and pollution; a separate section features a newspaper article about a potter who had visited their classroom.

A small bookcase and a greeting card display case, both filled with paperback books, convert one corner into a library. A number of the books in the collection reflect Carolyn's desire to promote sex equity. They twist tales in a new way: *Sleeping Ugly*, *Sam Johnson and the Blue Ribbon Quilt*, *The Dallas Titans Get Ready for Bed*, *The Paper Bag Princess*, *Brave Irene* and *My Mom Travels a Lot*.

Two other books require only skim readings to find their equity messages. *Tiger Flower*, beautifully illustrated, imaginatively and indirectly counters stereotyping of any kind. It describes a land "Where everything is turned around, where nothing is the way it should be or the way it once was." Large things become small and small things become large, so the tiger becomes a gentle, flower-loving king of the grass, and butterflies sail boats with their wings.

Piggybook is the story of a mother and wife who tires of doing all the housework as well as her work outside the home. She disappears one day, leaving her spoiled sons and husband a note telling them that they are pigs. They fend for themselves poorly, take on the form and habits of pigs and nearly die. She reappears; they are grateful, beg her to stay, continue to do the housework, return to human form, let her fix the car, and all are happy.

Carolyn is using her break period to prepare for a science class. With a tweezer she places a dead bee on a sheet of paper on each child's desk. Before she finishes, her students return. Thirty-one 2nd-graders enter the classroom, singly or in small groups of boys, girls or both. Winded from their physical education class, they speak in breathy bursts, comfortable with each other and their teacher, and make their way to their places in the tight United Nations arrangement of desks, which alternates boy, girl, boy, girl. The children respond to the specimens on their desk tops with much animation.

Calming them, Carolyn calls out slowly, "Who is ready for science? Hold on to your bees, boys. Hold on to your bees, girls." She then whirs a mechanical bee on a string above her head, its hum quieting the group, and walks around the room, finally stopping in front of one child's desk.

Emphasizing the word *scientist*, she directs him politely, "Please pass every scientist in the room a piece of this cut-up honeycomb." She repeats this procedure three more times, asking another boy and two girls to assist in distributing the honeycomb pieces and small magnifying glasses.

As Carolyn conducts her science lesson, she calls on children in unpredictable ways, managing to distribute attention equally among the boys and girls. After asking a question, while arms are waving in the air, she looks across the room to a child whose hands are folded on her desk, "Sasha, would you call on someone for the answer?" The raised hands and stretching bodies shift toward Sasha.

Carolyn encourages the children to cooperate with each other. "Go show him how you found that." When a boy can't answer her question, she tells him, "Go get someone to whisper in your ear and then tell us."

Toward the end of the lesson, she focuses their attention on the value of learning science and does some active, sex-equitable career education. "When you grow up, what kind of a career, occupation could you have for which you would need information like this?"

"A beekeeper."

"Yes. Could anyone be a beekeeper?"

"Yes!"

As various occupations are discussed, Carolyn asks them who could be in that occupation. By this time in the year, the boys and girls know that the right answer is, "Everybody could."

A 4th Grade in September

It is a September morning, the fourth day of school, and Carolyn seems to have made the adjustment to a higher grade level with ease. Black-and-white, poster-sized photographs of Einstein and a cluster of photographs of the Mona Lisa dominate the information-rich walls of the classroom.

Carolyn leads a discussion of the book *Call It Courage*, guiding the students to examine not only the bold actions of the main character, but also his feelings of fear. She thus teaches, consciously or unconsciously, a nonstereotyping perspective on the main character, highlighting his humanness in being both brave and fearful. "Ladies and gentlemen, think of a time when you have been afraid, afraid for your own safety's sake." She then directs students to tell their experiences of being afraid to other students in their desk groups. Everyone takes a turn.

Their desks, arranged into islands of four, two boys, two girls, are good settings for Carolyn's cooperative-learning strategies. In a written exercise that follows the reading, boys and girls work together, leaning over their desks to discuss their answers. Carolyn circulates, listens and redirects: "Before you ask me, did you ask the people in your group?" No single pattern of assistance predominates: boys help each other and the girls; girls help each other and the boys.

Minutes later, recess shows a clear contrast in the students' interactions. They immediately segregate into sex groups. Most of the boys run to a distant field to play soccer and most of the girls lock arms for a game of their own or huddle around Carolyn, moving with her like appendages as she monitors the playground activities on her duty day. One small group is integrated, mixing two girls with three boys. It passes by in a blur as one of the girls clutching a football races from her pursuers.

Seeing Carolyn's encouragement of equity, it is easy to imagine the life lessons her students will gain in her classroom. Less predictable is how or whether their recess interactions will change. The girl with the football hints of hope.

On a broader scale, we find other hints of hope. Carol Gilligan's most recent study and project, "Women Teaching Girls" (see Gilligan, 1990), has gained attention in the national public media as well as in the professional journals and magazines. And the American Association of University Women has made educational gender equity the focus of its 13th issue brief, "Restructuring Education: Getting Girls into America's

Goals" (AAUW Outlook, 1990). The organization has already begun its efforts to respond to what it regards as a crisis in educational gender bias by: 1) commissioning a national poll to explore boys' and girls' perceptions of themselves and their futures; 2) offering fellowships "to support the work of teachers seeking to advance gender equity in the classroom, increase the effectiveness of math and science instruction for girls, and meet the needs of minority students and students at risk for dropping out" (AAUW Outlook, 1990, p.18); 3) organizing "a roundtable of the country's educational, corporate, and political leaders to intensify national debate on the issue of gender bias in education and begin to find solutions" (Horwitz, 1990, p. 13). Once again, we may be ready to grow by changing our sensitivities, extending our knowledge and exploring solutions, so that all students can receive the benefits of a sound and fair education and the promise of a fuller future.

RESOURCES

Books for Children

- Bauer, C. F. (1986). *My mom travels a lot*. New York: Viking.
 Browne, A. (1989). *Piggybook*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
 Cooney, B. (1982). *Miss Rumphius*. New York: Viking Penguin.
 Ernst, L. C. (1983). *Sam Johnson and the blue ribbon quilt*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.
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Diversity in the Classroom: A Checklist

Karen Matsumoto-Grah

This checklist is designed to help teachers and other educators to effectively identify and respond to diversity in the classroom. It focuses on various aspects of the classroom environment, including curriculum materials, teaching strategies and teacher/student behaviors.

Teaching Materials

- _____ Are contributions and perspectives of women and cultures other than EuroAmericans integrated into textbooks and other curriculum materials?
- _____ Are women, ethnic minorities and people of diverse socioeconomic classes and religions portrayed in a nonstereotypical manner?
- _____ Do the resource materials include appropriate information about religion when religion is integral to the context of the subject?
- _____ Do textbooks or curriculum materials focus on "famous people," usually those of privileged class status; or are the accomplishments and hard work of poor and working-class people given equal focus and respect?
- _____ Do the resource materials include cultures represented by families in your school and community?
- _____ Are there resource materials available for limited-English-proficient students in their native languages?
- _____ Are teaching materials selected that allow all students to participate and feel challenged and successful?

Teacher as Role Model—Questions To Ask Yourself

- _____ Am I knowledgeable about the religious, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds of my students and people in my community?

- _____ In my own life, do I model respect for, and inclusion of, people who are different (religion, race, language, abilities, socioeconomic class)?
- _____ Do students perceive me as sincerely interested in, and respectful of, contributions made by women and the many ethnic, religious, racial and socioeconomic groups that make up the country?
- _____ Do I know where to find resources regarding:
 - multicultural studies?
 - disabled students/specific handicaps?
 - religion?
 - other languages?
 - gender bias?
- _____ Do I respectfully accommodate differently abled students in my classroom?
- _____ Do I recognize and acknowledge the value of languages other than standard English?
- _____ Can I recognize and constructively address value conflicts based on race, religion or socioeconomic class?

Teacher/Student Interactions

- _____ Am I careful not to prejudge a student's performance based on cultural differences, socioeconomic status or gender?
- _____ Do I promote high self-esteem for all children in my classroom? Do I help each child to feel good about who he/she is?
- _____ Do I encourage students to understand and respect the feelings of others who are different from them?
- _____ Do my students see me as actively confronting instances of stereotyping, bias and discrimination when they occur?
- _____ Given what I ask students to talk or write about, do I avoid placing value on having money, spending money or major consumer products?
- _____ Do I put myself in the place of the limited-English-proficient student and ask, "How would I feel in this classroom?"
- _____ Do I make an effort to learn some words in the home languages that my limited-English-proficient students speak?

_____ Am I conscious of the degree and type of attention I am giving to members of each gender in classroom interactions? Do I have an equitable system for calling on students?

_____ Do I use gender-neutral language?

_____ Do I teach about religion, rather than teaching religion or ignoring religion altogether?

_____ When teaching about religion, do I:

- place religion within historical and cultural context?
- use opportunities to include religion in history, literature and music?
- avoid making qualitative comparisons among religions?
- avoid soliciting information about the religious affiliations or beliefs of my students?

Teaching Children To Be Proactive

_____ Do I teach children to identify instances of prejudice and discrimination?

_____ Do I help my students develop proper responses to instances of prejudice and discrimination?

General Strategies

_____ Do I involve parents and other community members to help children develop greater understanding of the benefits and challenges of living in a culturally diverse society?

_____ Do I inform parents of my multicultural, anti-bias curriculum?

_____ Do I support and encourage the hiring of minority teachers and staff?

_____ Do I build a secure and supportive atmosphere by creating a noncompetitive classroom environment?

_____ Do I use opportunities such as current events to discuss different cultures and religions?

_____ Do I provide students with opportunities to problem-solve issues of inclusiveness?

_____ Do I use activities that demonstrate how the privilege of groups of higher economic status is directly connected to the lack of privilege of lower socioeconomic status people?

- _____ Do I have students examine and analyze the representation of class, race, gender, ability and language differences in media and their community?
- _____ Do I recognize that tracking reinforces "classism" and is counterproductive to student learning at all ability levels?
- _____ Do I utilize children's literature to help students understand and empathize with individuals who have experienced prejudice and discrimination and to discuss important social issues?

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